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THE INDEPENDENT

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Friday 10 April 1996 45p (IR50p) No 3,581 *

British and Irish governments in last-minute search for final elements to seal historic peace agreement

Eyes of the world on Ulster

By David McKitterick
Ireland Correspondent

NORTHERN Ireland was on the brink of an historic pact spanning both Unionism and republicanism last night as the long-running political talks seemed to be moving towards final success.

The eyes of the world were on the Stormont talks complex in Belfast throughout the day as Tony Blair and the Irish prime minister, Bertie Ahern, nudged and coaxed the parties towards agreement.

Last night, they appeared to have succeeded as Unionist leader David Trimble received the endorsement of his party executive for the emerging deal, winning two standing ovations. But there were ugly signs of things to come when flag-waving loyalist protesters jostled police in Belfast city centre and later blocked the gates of Stormont.

The first sign of a breakthrough was reported at 6 pm by Ulster Unionist deputy

splintering on the issue within Sinn Féin and the IRA; the calculation of Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams will be that most of the potential dissidents have now gone, and that the accord can be successfully sold to the republicans who remain.

But considerable dissent is already visible on the Unionist side, where the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, is vowing to smash whatever agreement should emerge. Last night, in a classic Paisley scare story, he announced that an agreement would mean officially sanctioned paramilitary policing - "You're going to have gunmen in uniform being policemen," he declared.

Mr Trimble's meeting last night with his party executive - at which he received the ovations - was clearly designed to cover himself against allegations of reaching an agreement without properly taking soundings from the grassroots. Such accusations have in the past proved damaging, and on occasions politically fatal for previous Unionist leaders.

The first official admission that the talks might not be complete by the midnight deadline came, bizarrely, from Kentucky, where President Clinton's spokesman, Mike McCurry, said the President had been told by Mr Mitchell that "agreement is near but the talks will probably go past the deadline".

Last night, the two governments were planning to produce another paper in succession to that delivered to the parties by talks chairman George Mitchell earlier this week. This would represent a near-final version of an agreement.

Tony Blair's official spokesman said the Prime Minister believed that agreement could be reached by the midnight deadline: "I think he feels there is an irresistible force, and an immovable object and the irresistible force will prevail."

Gerry Adams said his party had submitted amendments and texts on areas of difficulty which included British constitutional change, the shape of all-Ireland institutions, policing, prisoners and other issues.

Monica McWilliams, leader of the Women's Coalition, said tensions inside the talks were running high but insisted a deal was possible.

Mr Paisley's deputy, Peter Robinson, said: "We are not a part of this process because it was very clear the Government wanted to do a deal with terrorists, who were busy busting kneecaps, shooting and even bombing. They wanted to do a deal with terrorists in order to silence their guns."



Waiting for word: Tony Blair and Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam at Stormont last night as the deadline neared

Photograph: John Giles/PA

Four hundred years of bloody history: how do you explain that in a soundbite?

By Donald Macintyre in Belfast

"WHAT my station will want to know is what divides the two sides," a Danish television journalist explained to a British colleague, vainly hoping for an answer.

It looked increasingly likely yesterday that the "two sides" had managed to find common ground - but then, to muddy the waters, police had to seal the gates of Stormont Castle as scores of demonstrators - many thought to be followers of the Rev Ian Paisley - arrived on the scene to register their protest at the way things appeared to be going.

If the Danish journalist was already confused then here was further evidence of the deep scars of Ireland's 400 years of blood-stained history. And if he meant what ex-

actly was going on behind the grim exterior of the castle buildings, there were no definite answers to that either.

A ragged village of Portakabins, makeshift canvas "studios", a marquee with trestle tables for laptops, cups of coffee and lukewarm sausage rolls signified what journalistic veterans of the Troubles said was the largest international media presence seen in Northern Ireland. A dozen satellite dishes beamed out improvised press conferences given by party delegations.

Earlier the Prime Minister's official spokesman, Alastair Campbell, had used the temporary briefing room to give an optimistic progress report after officials had ensured that microphones and cameras were switched off. Gnomish utterances, supplemented by furtive mobile phone calls to the parties inside the building formed

the basis of such journalistic wisdom as there was to be had. The battery of reporters clearly visible to the talks participants inside the building appeared last night to be one of the pressures forcing the parties closer together.

As the temperature started to plummet after a freak snowfall, there were rumours of a televised signing ceremony sometime in the small hours of Good Friday. There was spin, and counter-spin, from all the parties but very little hard wording from the detailed documents under discussion.

Everybody knew that Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, the Taoiseach, were inching the parties towards the kind of historic breakthrough which the 1970s Sunningdale Agreement had tried, and in the end, failed to be, but nobody could yet be quite sure how and when it would really end.

Camera-shy Cook marries in secret

ROBIN Cook pulled off a coup yesterday when he wroug-footed the media by marrying his fiancée, Gaynor Regan, 10 days earlier than expected, writes Fran Abrams.

One witness said the Foreign Secretary punched the air in delight when he emerged from the register office in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, just after 8.30am and found no photographers waiting outside.

The couple, who have been frequently in the headlines since Mr Cook left his wife of 18 years for Ms Regan last August, announced last month that they were to marry at Cheltenham on 19 April.

However, in a statement released after yesterday's ceremony, they said they had held it sooner "because they wished it to be a private event, free from media intrusion".

The timing of the marriage could not have been better. With the Northern Ireland peace talks nearing a climax and Parliament closed for the Easter recess, publicity about the event was kept to a minimum.

There were also rumours



The new Mr and Mrs Cook

that Mr Cook had pulled off a further victory over his ex-wife Margaret, from whom he was divorced last month. A newspaper report yesterday claimed she was about to pub-

lish a book about a political marriage and that its serialisation in a newspaper - believed to be the *Sunday Times* - was to be announced just before 19 April.

Yesterday, Dr Cook was at work at St John's Hospital in Edinburgh. She said she did not want to comment on the marriage, but added: "I suppose I wish them well."

The Foreign Office statement said: "The couple will be holding a celebration for family and close friends. They will have a honeymoon over the Easter recess before Mr Cook goes back to his desk as Foreign Secretary at this busy time for Britain's foreign policy."

More than 100 Muslim pilgrims die in Saudi stampede

MORE THAN 100 Muslim pilgrims were crushed to death in a stampede at the haj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia yesterday, the last official day of the sacred Islamic rite.

Haj security forces said the stampede occurred in the plain of Mena, where large crowds of pilgrims assembled near a bridge on their way to a ritual in Jamarat where they symbolically stone the devil.

"Enormous crowds overflowing to Jamarat caused the death of a number estimated at 107 pilgrims, according to an initial count," a security statement said. The final number of casualties and the identity of the

victims had not yet been established, it added.

The stampede apparently occurred in the same area in which 270 people were crushed in another haj stampede in 1994.

More than 1.7 million pilgrims from 100 countries this year performed haj, one of the pillars of the Islamic faith.

Last year, 343 pilgrims were killed and more than 1,500 others injured when a fire swept through some 70,000 tents in Mena. In 1990, 1,426 haj pilgrims were crushed in a stampede in a tunnel. After the 1994 stampede, authorities doubled the width of the 1km long Jamarat bridge.

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هڪ نامن الاھل

Heartland waits to be convinced

By Kim Sengupta
in Portadown

THERE will be no peace in Northern Ireland without Portadown. This fiercely proud heartland of loyalism has to be convinced that the agreement being hammered out at Stormont has something to offer them, and is not just a sell-out of Protestant interests camouflaged in rhetoric.

Portadown has come to symbolise what is seen as Loyalist intransigence and sectarianism. This is the hometown of Billy Wright, leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force murdered in the Maze, who do not recognise and are not taking part in the Mitchell negotiations.

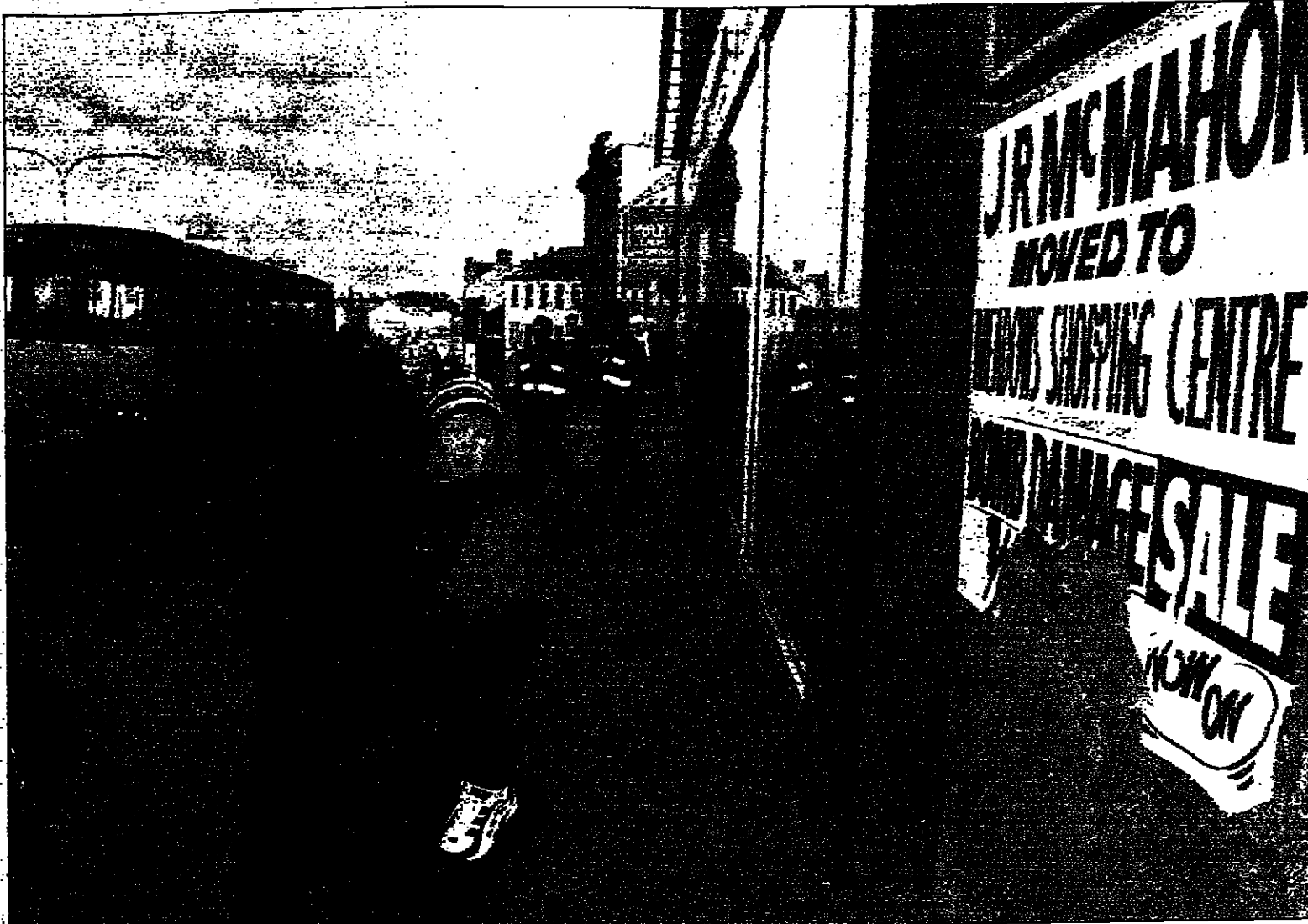
Drumcree is just two miles away and preparations are already under way for the annual Orange Parade on the Garvagh Road, with all its potential for confrontation and conflict.

But many of this city's Protestants, who make up 73 per cent of the population, maintain that it is they who are discriminated against and are the real victims of the Troubles.

The Loyalist housing estates of Portadown mourn the martyrdom of Wright. Slogans on the walls over neatly painted kerbstones in red, blue and white declare "Not talking but walking - Drumcree", "LVF, the true defenders", and the old battle cry of "No Surrender".

At the Edgartown housing estate, where Wright used to drink at the Golden Hind, a man wearing gold chains and sporting an armful of tattoos said: "If [David] Trimble and his kind sell out Ulster, people will know there is nothing left to lose. There will be war."

The man added: "There is plenty of everything around from talking to people, guns, plastics, no problem."



Shoppers in David Trimble's home town of Portadown hunt for bargains in the bomb-damaged sales in the wake of last month's 500lb car bomb Photograph: Pacemaker

The LVF was born out of the mid-Ulster unit of the Ulster Volunteer Force when the parent body expelled it after a bitter dispute over a pre-Drumcree march. Following Wright's killing it went on a murder spree of Republicans and Catholics.

"We support them," said Margaret, a housewife. "They're the only ones who are

prepared to look after us. Billy Wright was a good man, he did a lot for the community."

Billy Wright's grandfather was elected an alderman in Portadown. He stood as an Independent. Billy grew up with Catholics, and even in his days as a para-military commander claimed that he was not sectarian. What would happen if a

Catholic walked in here? After knowing smiles one said: "He wouldn't be walking out of here." What about after a peace settlement? "He wouldn't be walking out of here."

Gangs of Protestant and Catholic youths have been involved in skirmishes in the city's High Street mall. Allan Wilson, 36, a Protestant self-employed

businessman said: "We never had this before. Hardly a sign of progress is it? I doubt if the peace deal is going to work, it seems to me that one side is getting everything and the other nothing. The Protestant people are losing out."

The Catholic minority in the city are guardedly optimistic about the future. A

woman from a Catholic estate said: "Both sides have got to make compromises. It is silly to say that all Catholics support Sinn Féin or the IRA. But we certainly do not like to see all the troubles that come with the Orange marches. That's the trouble with this country, there are too many memories and not enough looking forward."

Bitter experience puts hope on hold

By Andrew Buncombe
in the Falls Road, Belfast

FOR at least an hour yesterday afternoon the sun was blazing in the Falls Road as Tricolours, tied to every other lamppost fluttered wildly and the wind kicked up the dust.

Kathleen McPeake was heading home from the shops with the youngest of her three sons. "I don't know if there can ever be an agreement," she said. "There is talk of compromise but things here have been the same for so long I don't know if people can agree."

"Things" on the Falls Road in west Belfast, refer to what the republican community sees as the continuing intransigence of the Protestants.

As individuals they might be very nice people, but as a community, how can you trust them? It was the same in their parents' day and in the days of their parents' parents as well. In this way, the new oral history continues.

Not that Mrs McPeake, 51, is overly negative. "Something has to be done. My three children were brought up in the Troubles and I don't want it to be the same for my grandchildren." But while she desperately hopes for a fair settlement, like

so many others her hopes are tempered by scepticism.

As she spoke an army patrol emerged from the RUC station on the other side of the street. Half a dozen soft-faced boys in camouflage dodged down the road, eyes darting left and right, guns to their shoulders. Everyone looked 17 years old.

Mrs McPeake didn't blink. It might have been another clichéd image of Northern Ireland, but for her it is a way of life. A little further into the estate at the BLT Bakery a girl was making sandwiches while the radio played Bruce Springsteen.

"I don't think many people are really bothered what happens," she said, carefully spreading the slices with margarine from a large plastic tub. "I have got Protestant friends, I go disco-dancing with them. It makes no difference to me."

But it would be wrong to try and make some simple distinction between the views of one generation and the next in the nationalist community, and worse still to try and portray the community as speaking with one voice. Every person seems to have a different opinion and every person a different perspective.

One man, a self-employed welder, talked of his support for

the extremist breakaway groups such as Continuity IRA and the INLA. He said he thought they were doing a good job "whacking" the loyalists.

Ann Bradley, who works in a newsagent's, recalled how her brother was murdered by the loyalists in 1972, and his body left in the Protestant Shankill Estate.

"But I don't think all people from the Shankill are bad people," she said. "There are a lot of good people."

Bronach Best, a 12-year-old heading home from school in her brown uniform, told how she preferred All Saints to the Spice Girls. And she added: "I think there should be peace in the world and we can all be friends and live together."

The sun did not last long. By 5pm, a light snow shower had blown in from the mountains - and in the shadow of the euphemistically titled "Peace Wall", Lorraine Lidester, 19, told how she dreamt of moving out of the province when she finished her business administration course.

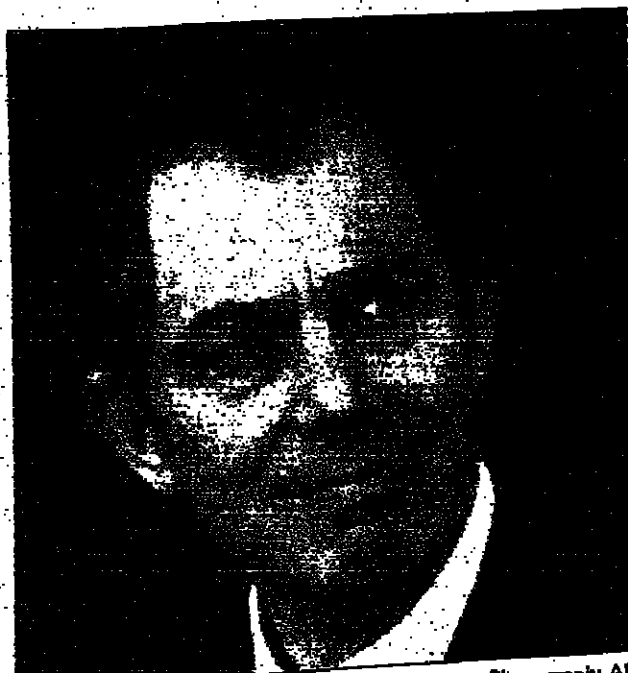
"A lot of people want to get out," she said.

But would a settlement 10 miles away at Stormont Castle encourage her to stay? "Yes," she said. "I think it might."



"Something has to be done": In the Falls Road yesterday Photograph: Pacemaker

Blair and Trimble: the key relationship



Showing the strain: Tony Blair yesterday Photograph: AP

A KEY building-block in the negotiations has been the development of a constructive working relationship between Tony Blair and the Ulster Unionist Party leader, David Trimble.

Without a basis of mutual confidence no new arrangement would have been possible since Unionism has traditionally been mistrustful of successive British governments, regarding them as too ready to do deals with Irish nationalism.

This was obvious in 1995 at the news conference when Mr Trimble declared he was standing for the leadership of his party. Asked what changes he would make he replied: "One small change that I would make, but none the less crucial change - I would never go into Downing Street alone. You've got to

David McKitterick on the balancing act necessary to keep Unionists on board

have someone else with you to take notes; to observe and to listen carefully is absolutely crucial, because one must be careful not to be seduced."

The high degree of suspicion evident in those remarks was in marked contrast to the scene at Hillsborough Castle earlier this week when the cameras caught a shirt-sleeved Tony Blair leading Mr Trimble to his car. While their body language could not be described as relaxed, it did seem to speak of a businesslike relationship; and the fact that no other Unionist was there to take notes, to observe and to listen carefully spoke volumes.

Mr Blair privately spelt out

the basis of his approach to Unionism when he spoke to Irish-American figures in Washington in February. A note of the meeting was later leaked. According to this account: "The Prime Minister said that the Unionist community felt isolated in many ways. The Irish government supported the nationalist side, whereas the British government obviously had to take account of both communities. This led the Unionists to tend to resist all change."

"The important thing was that the Unionists had signed up to North-South structures. As far as Trimble was concerned he had come a good deal further

than many Unionists wanted him to, for example accepting North-South structures. It was important to remember that Trimble was under constant attack from [Democratic Unionist Party leader] Paisley and [UK Unionist Party leader] McCartney, so that giving comfort to the Ulster Unionists was vital."

Mr Blair said national boundaries were becoming less relevant over time, describing the Republic of Ireland as a go-ahead, open and modern society. But he returned to Mr Trimble's difficulties, saying he "had to be an advocate of change without making himself vulnerable to charges of betrayal".

It seems clear from this that he assessed the Unionist leader as a potential moderniser, around whom the basis of a new deal could be built.

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Tabloid planning to run Michael photos

By Tim Cornwell
in Los Angeles

SINGER George Michael was in hiding yesterday, out of sight and sound of the tabloid press, but there was no end in sight to the public humiliation of his arrest at a public toilet in a Beverly Hills park.

According to a top Californian news agency, the *News of the World* is planning a photo spread this week which conclusively "outr" Michael. The pictures show him in the company of a close male friend, including some of him sunbathing in the Will Rogers Memorial Park and even about to enter the lavatory, it was reported.

The newspaper acquired the photographs for an estimated \$50,000 (£30,000) last year, according to the news agency, via All Action, a London agency, acting on behalf of two Hollywood paparazzi. But they were held back after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, a close

friend and fan of the singer. Last night, the *NoW* refused to confirm or deny that it would be running the pictures.

Michael, 34, was arrested on Tuesday by a undercover officer. He gave his real name, Georgios Kyriacos Panayiotou. Officers did not recognise him until they booked him at the station, when he listed his stage name under "other names used" and "singer" as his occupation.

Released three hours later on \$500 bail, apparently before reporters were tipped to the arrest, he made use of the time to pull an effective vanishing act. There was no sign of him at the Beverly Hills address he gave to police.

On some accounts he was sheltering at the home of Hollywood record producer David Geffen. As news of the photographs emerged, Beverly Hills police said the arrest occurred after recent complaints of lewd conduct at the park, and was not aimed at netting Michael.



War game: Curator Ian Smith at a new Cold War museum based at the Hack Green nuclear bunker, Cheshire, which would have been one of 17 centres of government in the event of attack. Photograph: Bruce Adams

Unions are winning the battle for recognition

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

COMPANIES are increasingly willing to recognise unions as ministers press ahead with plans for a law to boost employees' rights, the Trades Union Congress has found.

Workers' leaders report a substantial rise in the number of union recognition agreements over the past six months, covering an extra 70,000 employees.

The figures were published after a two-hour late night meeting on the issue of union rights between ministers and union leaders on Wednesday night. Employees' representatives were left with the impression that the Government would be attempting to steer a middle course between the aspirations of unions and the concerns of employers in framing legislation.

The TUC wants recognition to be granted when backed by more than half of those voting in a ballot. The Confederation of British Industry argues it should be more than half of the total workforce. A mandatory 50 to 60 per cent participation rate in any ballot is likely to form the compromise.

It is understood that while the Department of Trade and Industry has formed its views on the proposed legislation, the White Paper "Fairness at Work", which will contain the proposals, requires the attention of the Prime Minister who has been preoccupied with the peace talks in Northern Ireland.

The latest TUC Trade Union Trends calculates that recognition deals are currently outpacing instances of "derecognition" by 45 to one.

John Monks, TUC general secretary, said the data sug-

gested that the "mere presence" of the law would encourage more voluntary agreements and that statutory procedures would only need to be used in a minority of cases.

It is known that companies in a wide range of industries are reassessing their attitude to unions ahead of the publication of the White Paper. Many businesses, however, will wait to see the detail of the plans before committing themselves to a system of collective bargaining.

The CBI contended that few companies were making moves on the issue because legislation was still some time away.

The TUC report said that 40 per cent of unions reported securing new recognition deals within the past six months, compared to only 24 per cent in the previous half year.

The Government was yesterday urged to introduce fresh legislation on behalf of 900,000 temporary workers after a Court of Appeal judgment cast considerable doubt on the rights of employees on fixed term contracts.

The court ruled that although production assistant Kelly Phillips had worked more than the statutory two years for the BBC, she had no right to claim unfair dismissal. Ms Phillips had signed "waiver clauses" in four separate consecutive contracts and therefore did not qualify for protection under the law.

Stephen Cavalier, of solicitors Thompsons, described the judgment as "stunning" and said it flew in the face of other rulings. He said that Ms Phillips, with the backing of television production union Bectu, would appeal to the House of Lords.

Burglars get life for killing

THREE burglars were yesterday given life sentences for the murder of a keen runner who chased and caught up with them after he returned home from work to find that they had ransacked his house. Christopher Williams, 23, died from a stab wound to his heart when the gang turned on him and attacked him on waste ground in July last year. His pregnant girlfriend and their three-year-old daughter slept upstairs at their home in Nantyllyn, Mid Glamorgan, unaware of the tragedy.

Yesterday Alan Naylor, 27, Wyndham Richard Thomas, 21, and Christopher Chislett, 18, were each found guilty of the murder and aggravated burglary. Sentencing them at Swansea Crown Court, Mr Justice Maurice Kay said a "decent and brave young man" had been killed.

Cooke stays put

THE Metropolitan police has "no plans" to move child killer Sidney Cooke from his current location. Carlton TV's *London Today* programme had claimed that a cell block at Chesham police station in Hertfordshire, which is just within the Met's area, was being refurbished, possibly to hold Cooke.

However, Met sources said that there were no plans to move him from the police station where he is currently being kept until "suitable long-term accommodation" could be found. It is thought that Cooke, 70, who was released from prison custody on Monday after serving nine years of a 16-year term for the manslaughter of teenager Jason Swift, is being held at Leman Street police station in east London.

Seals lose protection

THE Government is to end the all-year-round protection given to common seals living on Shetland. The decision to lift the 25-year-old ban on killing the animals was taken after experts found that the population of common seals on the islands had reached a minimum of 6,000 and was "self-sustaining". As from 29 April, people holding an appropriate firearms licence will be able to shoot seals at any time outside the animal's breeding and pupping season which is from June to August.

PC rescues fisherman

A BEAT bobby plunged into icy waters to rescue a drunken fisherman who had tumbled out of his capsizing boat in a Birmingham reservoir. Constable Mike Tolley, who spent eight years in the Navy, took to the waters carrying a life buoy after an angler raised the alarm at the Lifford Lane Reservoir in Cotteridge on Wednesday night. The rescued man, aged 21, was yesterday recovering in hospital.

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Riding the merry-go-round

THE "new" Max Hastings, the *Evening Standard's* crusading editor who warned Londoners off Jeffrey Archer two weeks ago, is about to give further proof of his reformist zeal. He is poised to give Steven Glover his old media column back. Glover is also giving up his political column at the *Telegraph* to write on politics for the *Daily Mail*. Media observers will recall that Glover viciously attacked Hastings when he was editor of the *Daily Telegraph*. When Sir David English lured Hastings away to edit London's only afternoon daily, it was a foregone conclusion that Glover, a founder of *The Independent*, would be one of the first victims on Hastings' fortnight of the long knives. So it was, but now Hastings is forgiving Glover and welcoming him back into the fold. In the meantime, Glover, exchanging Conrad Black's silver for Lord Rothermere's gold, will be missed. "He's one of my closest friends, but I can't really stand to his way," says Frank Johnson, editor of the *Spectator*. "One always wants their friends to get rich."

Plight of the seatless

"SEATLESS" is the political equivalent of homeless - and sometimes it can be just as distressing to view. Such was the case last Tuesday at about 11.20am when Pandora wandered through the entrance hall of Conservative Central Office at Smith Square. Stretched out fast asleep on the sofa was former sports minister Ian Sproule, who lost his seat at the last election. Won't somebody help this seatless man get back in power? No? That's fine then.

Naked double standards



CASTING directors book your flights now! An Italian village in the region of Caserta contains 1,000 residents who are distant relatives of Leonardo DiCaprio, according to the Italian magazine *Oggi*. Apparently Leonardo's great-grandfather, Giuseppe, left the village of Trentola Ducenta in 1891 and sailed off to America. One of his local cousins has written an open letter to Hollywood's hottest star with an invitation he can hardly refuse: "We'll have you to dinner and introduce you to a beautiful girl from your family's hometown."

A visit could divert Leonardo from his legal battle with American magazine *Playboy*. He objects to the magazine's plan to run naked, previously published photographs of himself. He had no objection to talking Kate Winslet into posing nude for him on their first date on the *Titanic*. Isn't that good for the goose...?

World Cup-free zone

PANDORA salutes the French region of Alsace, home of France's fastest saunas, for making the most of what it doesn't have. The Alsatian tourist board has launched a campaign promoting the fact that there will be no World Cup matches in the region this summer. According to tourism director Olivier de Richioffitz, "You can be a football supporter and watch the games on television in very comfortable conditions... after a lovely outing in Alsace." And a very filling lunch.

Those who can't, teach

A READER has sent Pandora a possible explanation behind last week's story about the faulty English used on some GCSE English exam papers. Course literature from the Open University's post-graduate teacher-training course refers to "teaching competences" as in "The Open University... describes the teaching process in terms of five areas of teaching competences."

Lethal tiny tots

THE headlines about the children's massacre in Jonestown have disappeared. Meanwhile, it's business as usual for the American gun lobby. "The future of the shooting sports and our Second Amendment will rest on the shoulders of our grandchildren - and theirs," said the head of the National Rifle Association recently in an advertisement. "That's why, as NRA president, my major priorities are to reach out to America's youth." Presumably even the NRA would caution their gun-toting kids not to accept bullets from strangers.

Hard to swallow

THE President of the United States is scheduled to come to Birmingham in mid-May for the G8 World Summit meeting. Although he has not yet confirmed the booking, Clinton is expected to stay at the city's Swallow Hotel. Why are you laughing?

Pandora

DAILY POEM

It Was

By Gael Turnbull (from the Gaelic of Sine Reisdach)

It was a good boat, never better
and the sailing - winds, tides, harbours,
storms, discoveries - beyond telling
but now past salvage, good only for the axe.
Don't flinch. Every splinter
familiar as your breath, the wreckage
soon dried out, ready for kindling
to burn steadily enough on the nearest headland,
a clear mark to be seen far astern,
one which to set a new bear to steer
a new course with new companions
on a strange ship towards an unmarked horizon.

Our Daily Poems today and on Monday come from *A State of Independence*, an anthology edited by Tony Frazer of work by poets associated with his magazine *Shearsman*, including Roy Fisher, Harry Guest and Lee Harwood. *A State of Independence* costs £9.95, post free, from Stride Publications, 11 Sylvan Road, Exeter EX4 6EW.

By Steve Boggan

A TOP Army officer was yesterday cleared of "scandalous conduct" in his affair with a senior Wren at the end of a court martial which made a mockery of the armed services' approach to adultery.

Lt Col Keith Pople, 42, had admitted an affair with Lt Cdr Karen Pearce, 34, one of the most senior women in the Navy. After the nine-day case in Aldershot, which heard lurid details of the couple's three-year affair, Lt Col Pople left the court with his wife, Brenda.

His solicitor, William Bache, said: "The last 14 months have been very difficult for Col and Mrs Pople. All he wishes to do now is return to the service of his family and his country."

Friends who spoke to Lt Cdr Pearce shortly after the ruling said she was "astounded and outraged". Lt Col Pople had been accused of conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline by committing adultery with Lt Cdr Pearce at a time when he "was her immediate superior officer with an input into her confidential (assessment) reports". They both worked in the office of Admiral Sir Jock Slater, First Sea Lord.

Lt Col Pople had also been accused of scandalous conduct unbecoming the character of an officer for making threatening telephone calls to Lt Cdr Pearce and writing to Lt Nigel McTear, with whom she now lives, after the affair ended.

Although the relationship was admitted by both sides, the court accepted an assurance from Admiral Slater - the most senior officer ever to give evidence to a court martial - that Lt Col Pople was not Lt Cdr Pearce's superior officer even though he had a higher rank.

Rhydian Willis, for the defence, asked: "Is this really the right court for this particular matter? Should adultery really come to be seen as a criminal offence?"

"And when you look at the different views applied by different branches of the services you have to say that this might be... a matter which could be dealt with administratively."

Quite simply, she argued, "this case is about an affair. An



Lt Cdr Pearce: Shocked by court's judgment

affair that started and where two people fell in love and an affair that ended when they fell out."

The prosecution said that Lt Col Pople's behaviour after the affair ended was intended to win back Lt Cdr Pearce, but Ms Willis argued that his intentions were not unwelcome even though, with hindsight, they were foolish.

"She was in his system, under his skin and the same applied to her," she said. "She was trying to come to terms with it in the autumn of 1996 but she could not get him out of her system because it had been a very intense romance."

Last night, a spokesman for the Army said Lt Col Pople, who is now attached to HQ Land Command at Wilton, Salisbury, may yet face disciplinary charges, possibly over bringing the force into disrepute.

It had been a tale of love and lust, of infidelity and promiscuity, of betrayal, revenge and, finally, regret, which exposed the military's outdated attitude to adultery. It began in November 1993 when the couple were colleagues in the office of Admiral Slater.

Lt Cdr Pearce was in the dying throes of a bad marriage to a Royal Marine; Lt Col Pople, a father of two boys, spoke of leaving his wife, Brenda, and for three years, they continued their affair, even naming children they planned to have.

She was transferred to the aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious* in April 1995, while he became military assistant to Sir John Willis, a Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff, whose role included briefing the former defence secretary Michael Portillo and



Officer's mess: Lt Col Keith Pople after being cleared by the court in Aldershot yesterday

Photograph: Tim Ockenden/PA

Chris Armstrong, for the prosecution, and Rhydian Willis, for the defence, conducted cross-examination in an arguably more in-depth fashion than that seen in civil courts. Details of the couple's sexual practices, of the noises made by Lt Cdr Pearce during love-making and of gifts they gave each other - including gorilla dolls - were all mercilessly pursued.

In one exchange, which Vice Judge Advocate Edmund Moeelwyn-Hughes allowed to continue despite Lt Cdr Pearce's protestations, Miss Willis asked about her "little pink friend", a vibrator bought for her by Lt Col Pople.

It was the kind of exchange that characterised a hearing that had no winners. And it highlighted the extent to which senior officers in the armed services are out of touch with the rest of society.

The hopelessness of the top brass was perhaps demonstrated best when it emerged that they had set up a committee on board HMS *Illustrious* to support servicewomen. The Sexual Harassment Action Group was known as SHAG.

Leading article, page 18

the armed forces minister Sir Nicholas Soames. Later, Lt Col Pople served in Bosnia as the £45,000-a-year commanding officer of the 4th Regiment of the Army Air Corps.

They kept their relationship secret but alive, often in love letters, some of which were read out to the court. One poem written by Lt Col Pople,

entitled, "Welcome back, it's been some time", read:

When as in silks my Karen goes.

Then methinks how sweetly the sheen of her clothes.

Next when I cast my eyes and see

Oh how that glittering taketh me.

However, in June 1996, Lt

Col Pople, an experienced helicopter pilot, ended the affair when he found letters under Lt Cdr Pearce's bed suggesting she was seeing other men.

Lt Cdr Pearce told him she had been seeing Lt McTear since the previous February and with whom she had sex aboard HMS *Illustrious* in breach of the Navy's strict no

touching rule. Later, she told the court martial that was a lie - sex had, in fact, taken place off ship in a hire car.

However, in the Army, adultery is an offence and so Lt Col Pople was accused of conduct to the prejudice of good order and scandalous conduct unbecoming.

During the hearing, Lt Col

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No regrets over career scrambled by eggs

EDWINA CURRIE had eggs for breakfast yesterday "as a slightly defiant gesture". She also considered having a glass of champagne, but rejected the idea - presumably because she knew the day would be frantically busy.

Nearly 10 years on, salmonella in eggs was back. Or to be more precise it never went away. *New Scientist* reported this week that one in 650 eggs still contained the disease.

So, while preparing for her late-night Radio Five show and dashing off another chapter of her latest novel, the former junior health minister enjoyed a blast from the past.

The sudden media interest took her back to her two years as a health minister, she said, "except I haven't got a huge press office to back me up". Instead, she navigated her own way through an interview with Radio 4's 70-day programme, Jimmy Young's Radio 2 chat show and a host of calls from the media.

In December 1988, Mrs Currie caused a furore by announcing that "most of the egg production in this country is affected by salmonella". Sales dropped by 10 per cent and many egg producers went out of business. So did Edwina, who was forced to resign. In the wake of the episode, 2 million chickens were

IN THE NEWS EDWINA CURRIE

slaughtered. So did she regret speaking out all those years ago? After all, she might have made Cabinet status if she had kept her mouth shut, and the effect might have been no different. There were around 32,000 salmonella cases in 1997 compared with 27,000 in 1988, though the figures may not be entirely comparable. Mrs Currie stood by her words, though: "I can look at myself in the mirror most mornings, and I thank God I can. In the end, you have to deal with yourself."

And after all, she did not remain in the shadows for long. Even before she lost her Derbyshire South seat she continued to make headlines. She backed Michael Heseltine against Margaret Thatcher in 1990, turned down John Major's offer of a Home Office job in 1992, wrote a bonkbuster novel about Westminster life in 1993 and launched a bid to lower the homosexual age of consent to 16 in 1994.



Edwina Currie: 'I have always been grateful for all the opportunities I've had in my life'

Photograph: Bill Rowntree

Some people might have thought they had heard the last of her when she lost her seat in 1997 but they were wrong. Four months later she was back, with a new book, *She's Leaving Home*, and an announcement that she and her husband Ray were to separate after 25 years of marriage.

Now she hosts a Saturday and Sunday night show on Radio Five, *Late Night Cur-*

rie, and is finishing another book, though she coyly refused to give details yesterday.

The BBC insisted she say goodbye to her political career, at least for now. A Europhile, she had entertained thoughts of becoming an MEP. In any case, she said yesterday, her views would have hindered her selection in the anti-European Conservative Party and the prospect of serving about 5 million con-

stituents did not appeal. "I would be sitting in some committee room somewhere listening to some Belgian droning on and thinking I could be doing six hours of broadcasting and getting paid for it, or writing chapter 14. I am grateful that I had 14 years in Parliament and I have always been grateful for all the opportunities I've had in my life," she said.

Fran Abrams

FLIGHT OF FANCY

Edwina Currie first made headlines at the 1988 Tory conference when she brandished a glass of champagne. When she was then Home Secretary, she then acts like a Lord. Currie was reported to have experienced "a bit of a flight of fancy".

TIMELY TIPS

On how the old could avoid hypochondria: "Wear woollen hats and long johns." On how best-nursed could guard against AIDS when travelling abroad: "Take the wife." On how young women could avoid cervical cancer: "Don't wear trousers."

SECOND THOUGHTS

In January, Mrs Currie was announcing her separation. She said: "It had the chance I would marry Ray all over again... Ray and I now have a very good relationship, mostly because she's stopped."



VAUXHALL

VAUXHALL RECOGNISES VECTRA DRIVERS.

New car registration figures for the first quarter of 1998 show that the Vauxhall Vectra is now the best selling car in its class in the United Kingdom.

This performance continues a pattern of success established since its launch in 1995, including winning a prestigious Fleet award every year since its launch and taking leadership in the retail sector of its class in 1997. Recent launches of the SRi and GSi sports models have broadened the Vectra appeal and have been met with enthusiastic press reviews from the experts at leading journals such as Autocar and Auto Express.

We were therefore disappointed to see that a survey conducted amongst viewers of BBC Top Gear programme by J.D. Power and broadcast on 9th April shows early produced Vectras in a bad light. The survey was based on questionnaires returned by 445 drivers of N-registered Vectras, out of the total 53,000 Vectras sold that registration year.

Vauxhall has a deserved reputation for customer care and has always endeavoured to resolve any product concerns in an honest and straightforward manner. In the case of Vectra we believe any problems encountered in early production cars were handled professionally by Vauxhall and its dealers. If, however, any Vauxhall owners have concerns with their car, then we would like the opportunity of discussing these immediately. You can contact your local dealer or call us direct on 0800 783 7703.

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Chairman & Managing Director

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Taxi driver awarded £450,000 for assault

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

A TAXI driver has been awarded nearly £450,000 compensation for assault in the largest ever damages payout against a police force, it emerged yesterday.

A jury awarded George Randles, 52, the massive amount after hearing that nine years ago he was kned in the groin by an officer from Merseyside Police, shoulder charged, pushed to the floor and punched in the head.

He was awarded £300,000 exemplary damages, £100,000 aggravated damages, £40,000 for post traumatic stress disorder and £3,500 for his physical injuries - a total of £443,500.

Merseyside Police, however, has been given permission to appeal and is likely to have the sum cut substantially. A Court of Appeal ruling last February reduced the level of "exemplary" damages awarded by juries to a maximum of £50,000 in extreme cases.

The claim followed an incident in the Halewood area of Merseyside on Easter Sunday 1989, when Mr Randles, from Stockbridge Village, Merseyside, says he was stopped in his taxi by officers.

A dispute followed and the Mr Randles said he was assaulted.

"He was punching me in the face and I was swallowing blood and losing consciousness. Just then I heard a voice saying 'that's enough' and I felt the weight come off my chest," he said.

He said another officer had arrived on the scene and inter-

vened. He suffered seventeen separate injuries including two black eyes, a loose tooth, bruising to his shoulder, chest, face and scratches to his neck.

Following the incident, Mr Randles was convicted at a magistrates' court of threatening behaviour but cleared of assault. He then sued Merseyside Police.

After the hearing, which was held at Liverpool Crown Court, Mr Randles said: "I am here for justice. I did not want a shilling. I was fit and strong, a weaker man may well have died." The case finished on Wednesday, but the full details only emerged yesterday.

He said that since the incident his physical and mental condition have deteriorated so much that he has had to give up work. His solicitor Julian Linskill added: "Mr Randles is absolutely thrilled to bits with the decision."

Sir James Sharples, the Chief Constable of Merseyside, was less delighted. A spokesman said: "The Chief Constable is very disappointed at this decision of the jury and the award of damages."

"These awards seem to be out of all proportion to the incident and apparently out of step with awards and appeals in similar cases."

One of the highest previous awards - £220,000 to London hairdresser Kenneth Hsu for wrongful arrest, assault and imprisonment by police - was slashed to £35,000 last year after Scotland Yard won a landmark case to curb civil damages payouts to victims of unlawful arrest and assault by the police.

Murdered girl's mother to sue

THE MOTHER of schoolgirl Caroline Dickinson, murdered on a school trip to France nearly two years ago, yesterday launched a civil claim for damages against the education authority which organised the activity holiday.

Sue Dickinson, 40, from Launceston, started civil proceedings against Cornwall County Council for alleged negligence and breach of duty in the circumstances in which Caroline died.

Caroline, 13, was raped and murdered in a youth hostel in Fleigne Fougere, Brittany, on 18 July 1996. She was on a five-day trip with 39 other youngsters and five adults from Launceston Community College. Her killer has not been caught.

Mrs Dickinson has never spoken publicly about her daughter's death, but has sup-

ported the continuing efforts of Caroline's father, her former husband John Dickinson, to press the French police for a more effective investigation.

Her solicitor, Ian Langford read a statement which said Mrs Dickinson wanted to make it clear that her decision to proceed with court action was not motivated by personal gain. "If she is successful she intends to place any compensation in a trust fund for her daughter, Jenny," said Mr Langford.

Mr Langford said if Mrs Dickinson's case was successful, the likely award would not be more than £15,000.

Cornwall County Council said it had been advised by its insurers that it had no liability for the murder. The authority said it regretted the fact that Mrs Dickinson felt it necessary to issue proceedings.

Rush to flee threat of a white Easter

By Linus Gregoriadis
and Alistair Clair

RECORD numbers of holidaymakers are leaving Britain today because of the soaring value of the pound and the threat of a white Easter.

Airports and motoring organisations have been bracing themselves for the rush as an estimated 1.5 million Britons escape a cold, wet and windy start to the long weekend.

Torrential rainfall caused flash flooding in parts of Britain yesterday as holidaymakers attempted an early exit for the four-day break.

A spokesman for AA Roadwatch said: "The most badly affected areas have been in the Midlands. Extreme flooding in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire has led to many roads being closed. The fact that people were leaving to go on holiday has made matters even worse."

Wales was also badly affected by

the flooding, with the Environment Agency issuing warnings there. Weather experts say the torrential rain and plunging temperatures are set to continue throughout the holiday.

A spokeswoman for the Association of British Travel Agents (Abta) said yesterday: "An unprecedented number of people are going abroad this Easter, and it's largely due to the pound being so strong, especially against the European currencies. The Canary Islands, mainland Spain and the Balearics are the most popular destinations for people going abroad. The favourable exchange rate makes self-catering very popular."

At least half a million people are expected to use Channel tunnel services and ferries, while more than 800,000 people will fly.

A spokesman for Heathrow Airport said: "Easter is one of the busiest times of the year. We are expecting more than half a million passengers through the airport this weekend."

Greece is set to enjoy a tourist boom because of the recent devaluation of the drachma, according to Abta. But holidaymakers heading for Athens could face disruption because of public strikes this week in sympathy with Olympic Airways workers, who are unhappy with plans to restructure the state airline.

The AA has warned motorists to take extra care because of dangerous driving conditions. Motorists on the M25 were confronted with the bizarre sight of a yacht lying on the carriageway yesterday, after high winds had overturned it from its trailer.

Weather experts say there is a chance of a white Easter in Britain, although the possibility of snow is confined mainly to high ground.

William Hill, the bookmaker, has cut its odds on a white Easter from 33-1 to 6-1, following forecasts that the weekend will bring temperatures below freezing.



Rounded up: The Damien Hirst 'Spin' painting which will be sold by its owner, who won it in a competition

Photograph: Philip Meech

Hirst's spinning wheel brings good fortune

By Clare Garner

DAMIEN HIRST has helped many of his contemporaries make their reputations and now, quite by accident, he is doing it again - this time for a rank outsider.

The winner of one of Hirst's "Spin" paintings, which the artist donated to the *Big Issue* as a prize for a competition last autumn, turns out to be an aspiring artist. Chris Callaghan is employed as a support worker for people with learning difficulties, but enjoys painting portraits and murals on the side.

Mr Callaghan, in his late twenties, is selling the work in a sale of contemporary art at Christies on 22 April. The painting is expected to fetch between £22,000 and £28,000, and Mr Callaghan plans to live on the proceeds so that he can establish himself as a full-time artist.

Mr Callaghan, whose name has already been immortalised in the painting's title, *Beautiful Big Issue What's got a Bottom on the Top* (Chris Callaghan Swirly Pink Painting (With Smoked Fag)), will be sorry to part with the work, which for the past six months has been hanging in his mother's house because his one-room flat was too small.

"It's been nice to have owned a Damien Hirst," he said. "But I also can't deny that I could well use whatever money I get for it. I would like to use the money to support myself, while I concentrate on doing more of my painting."

Mr Callaghan, who lives in Liverpool, rarely enters competitions, but was lured by the prospect of joining the ranks of Charles Saatchi and owning a

painting by the most celebrated artist of his generation.

"I thought it would be good to have the chance to own a Damien Hirst painting, and I like the type of questions that were set," he said. "I am also an artist myself, so I have a keen interest in many things to do with contemporary art."

The questions were made up by Hirst, who guest edited the *Big Issue*, the magazine established to provide income for homeless people, in the week of the competition last September. They were: What's got a bottom at the top? (an umbrella); When is a door not a door? (when it's ajar); When does an orange become a joker? (when it's taking the pith); and What's got two legs, one eye, one ear and goes "Mooooo"? (half a cow - a reference to Hirst's work: *Mother and Child Divided*).

Hirst began painting his celebrated Spin paintings in 1995, the year he won the Turner Prize in 1995 for *Awake from the Flock*, a sheep in formaldehyde. All his Spin paintings are entitled *Beautiful*, followed by a series of other descriptive words relating to the work in question.

He was inspired by memories of the technique of spin painting which he saw as a child on the BBC's *Blue Peter*. The technique involves the spinning of the canvas on a potter's wheel and the pouring of household emulsion onto the spinning canvas to create a startling array of splatted colour.

Hirst pasted part of the *Big Issue* logo and a smoked cigarette onto Mr Callaghan's prize.

Baby milk rules 'being flouted'

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

"COMPELLING" evidence that the international code on baby milk is being widely violated is revealed this week in the *British Medical Journal*.

More than 3,000 women were interviewed in Bangladesh, Poland, South Africa and Thailand to see whether the international code of marketing substitutes for breast milk was being adhered to.

The World Health Organisation estimates that 1.5m deaths a year could be prevented by effective breast feeding protection. Failure to breast feed increases the risk of childhood diseases, impairs child development and may increase the risk of adult disease.

In some cases, as many as 50 per cent of health facilities had received free samples which were not being used for research or professional evaluation and as many as one in five health workers had received free gifts from the companies involved in manufacturing or distributing

the breast milk substitutes. Bangladesh was the only country studied which had laws governing the marketing of breast milk substitutes and had the smallest number of free samples - one out of 385 mothers said they had received free samples compared with 97 out of 370 mothers in Bangkok. In Warsaw, 56 per cent of facilities surveyed were found to have information given to health workers in contravention of the code.

The *BMJ* said the frequency of the violations shows that 16 years after the code was adopted "its requirements are still unmet", and "there is little to suggest that the situation would be different in many other countries".

The *BMJ* called for governments to incorporate the code into legislation and that monitoring for overt violations should be more systematic. There should also be more emphasis on a positive attitude to breast feeding, to counter "company propaganda, a challenge largely unfulfilled by health workers and professional bodies".

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Opera house chief pledges to rid it of elitist image

THE chairman of the Royal Opera House yesterday pledged to take it into the top three of the world's musical institutions.

Sir Colin Southgate also emphasised his determination to break away from elitism at the opera house, which is undergoing a renovation costing more than £200m.

He said ticket prices would be slashed and the public had to be persuaded that the Royal Opera House was a national treasure for all. "We're approaching this with tremendous energy at all levels," Sir Colin said.

In December, the opera house was harshly criticised in a report by the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee.

The board resigned, but the chief executive, Mary Allen, stayed on, only to resign at the end of last month. Sir Colin said yesterday that the post of chief executive, re-named general director, would be advertised within the next two

weeks and that many applications had already been received.

"This is the number one job in this art-form going. Very rarely do you get to run an opera and ballet company in a custom-built theatre," Sir Colin said as he showed a party of journalists around the building in Covent Garden, London.

Work on the opera house, which is expected to be finished in 18 months, includes refurbishing the main auditorium, with its ornate balconies and domed ceiling, as well as installing a studio theatre and large areas to facilitate scenery construction. Better sound quality and improved leg room are also priorities.

The building - which will be a home to the Royal Opera and Royal Ballet - is likely to house up to five restaurants without restrictions on who can eat where, depending on the cost of tickets. "We know that we have got to get people to understand that this is not an elitist place," said Sir Colin.

Efforts to do this would include building a piazza entrance off the main tourist section of Covent Garden and reducing mid-range ticket prices from £70-£80 to around £50.

"This is going to be a totally different building," he said. "It's a national treasure and we've got to persuade the great British public."

He said funding for the work - which included a controversial National Lottery grant of £78.5m - was steadily coming in, and not just from corporations. "Private giving is enormous. We had one guy who came in off the street and gave £40,000," Sir Colin said.

The institution should be artistically led, he said, adding: "We will have an artistic vision. Our aim is to get in the top three in the world."

Sir Colin, who was appointed chairman earlier this year, said he was still examining the Opera House's budget "with a fine-tooth comb", and added: "I'm an old-fashioned guy and I like to read every line."



Work of art: Terry Edwards and Patricia Cameron, of the Royal Opera Chorus, surveying the refurbished ceiling

Photograph: Rul Xavier

GTech to keep role in lottery

THE lottery watchdog, Oflot, ruled yesterday that the US firm GTech should be allowed to continue as a supplier to the National Lottery.

The company's fitness to remain involved was questioned after Richard Branson's High Court libel win over Guy Snowden, the company's former chairman, in February. The jury found that Mr Snowden tried to bribe Mr Branson into pulling out of the race to run the lottery, and the case resulted in the resignation of the then lottery regulator, Peter Davis. There were also allegations against GTech of impropriety or poor business practices in the United States.

John Stoker, Oflot's acting director-general, said yesterday: "I have concluded on the evidence currently available to me, that GTech is fit and proper for its role as a supplier of lottery systems and services to the National Lottery. I am satisfied that, subject to the assurances I have been given, [Mr Snowden] is no longer involved in the UK National Lottery. I will consider further steps should those assurances be breached in any way."

A spokesman for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, said: "We welcome the professional and efficient way that John Stoker has conducted his investigation. "Camelot can now build on the good job they have already been doing in running a very successful lottery. This, together with the reforms in the Lottery Bill, means the public can have full confidence that their lottery will be run and

regulated efficiently and that its proceeds are going to the good causes which are their priorities."

Asked whether the acquisition of GTech's stake in Camelot by the other Camelot shareholders was a significant factor, Mr Stoker said: "I did welcome it, it did simplify matters of fitness and propriety."

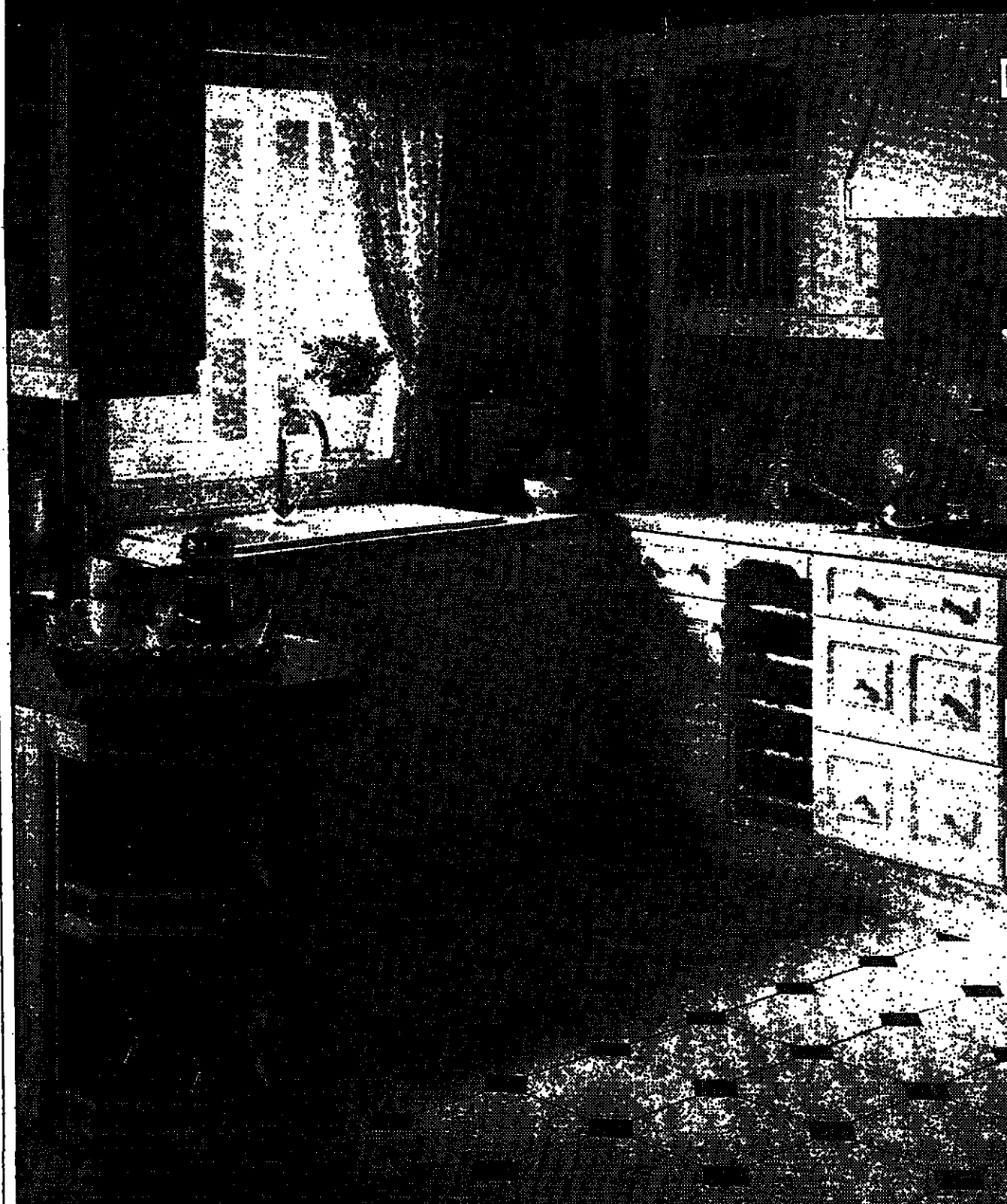
Asked whether GTech was fit and proper at the time the licence was given to Camelot, he said: "The licence was let in 1994. The conclusion that GTech and Camelot were at that stage fit and proper was taken by my predecessor on the knowledge available at the time. I don't see that ... he could have reached a different conclusion."

He said the board members whom he interviewed recently were "extremely responsible people". "These aren't lightweight people, they are not in any sense shady or untrustworthy, and I looked at the evidence they put to me."

The GTech chairman and chief executive officer, William Y. O'Connor, said the company was "extremely pleased" with the announcement, which he called a "turning point".

The Camelot chief executive, Tim Holley, said yesterday's decision reaffirmed the company's confidence in GTech. And he added: "The UK National Lottery could not have become the best in the world without the contribution of GTech. I commend their performance and professionalism as suppliers of lottery systems and expertise, as well as their open, co-operative conduct throughout the recent inquiry."

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Rank outsider: Fiona Stewart, 23, yesterday becoming the first woman to carry the Sword of Honour as Sandhurst's top cadet at the Sovereign's Parade. She beat 183 others to the award and will join the Royal Signals. Photograph: Tom Pilon

Teachers and lecturers' conference: Call for regulation of Web companies

Paedophiles targeting pupils via the Internet

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

PAEDOPHILES are trying to trap children through school e-mail addresses, teachers warned yesterday.

Ministers want every child to have their own e-mail address and access to the Internet. But yesterday teachers called for more protection against children downloading pornography, and appealed for tough regulation of Web companies.

Michael Moore, head of Little Hulton community school in Manchester, said sixth-formers at one school in the North-west had been targeted by paedophiles soon after the introduction of e-mail.

He said: "A paedophile ring

in Sheffield discovered the system and invited students to take part. They suggested friendships with other males. When schools got involved in the Internet they seek publicity because it's good for the school and people with the wrong intentions certainly can easily identify students at the school and use e-mail.

"The students reported it very quickly and the school reported it to the police.

"It's easy to send e-mail to a block of people, and it's very low cost. Unless the teachers themselves read every entry it's very difficult to monitor it."

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers' meeting in Bournemouth called for schools to be given electronic guards against unsuitable material, to protect teachers from

legal and other challenges from parents.

They said obscene or racist material was available on the Internet even if computers were screened using so-called "firewall" software. Teachers fear they could be held liable if schoolchildren download illegal obscene material.

Mr Moore said in another case a music teacher had found pornographic pictures after searching the World Wide Web for the score of the *The Sound of Music*. He said: "When they are on the Internet, students will try looking for this material and they will want to amaze their friends."

Brian Waggett, a teacher at Range High School in Formby, Merseyside, said: "Pupils will be attempting to access the Net

and they will find dubious material. They will find it and you must be on your guard. Nobody can police the Internet completely, it's a monster."

Terry Gallagher, a teacher at Top Valley School, Nottinghamshire, said: "Children are naturally inquisitive ... 27 per cent of families have Net access. When they are not on a school provider, these young people will be able to access all these sites and I feel our Net education at school should acknowledge this."

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, said British Internet providers were trying to police their services, but unregulated foreign sites were easily accessed. "Guidance has already been given to teachers. But it's extremely difficult."

We'll cut school red tape, says minister

By Ben Russell

STEPHEN BYERS, the schools minister, moved to head off a summer of strife in schools yesterday by promising swift action to cut teachers' workloads.

Mr Byers made an unscheduled visit to the Association of Teachers and Lecturers' conference in Bournemouth for talks to avert industrial action over school bureaucracy.

He intervened on the eve of the largest teaching conference to reassure teachers that Government plans would make action unnecessary.

He said "When the unions are fully aware of how the gov-

ernment intends to implement the recommendations of the bureaucracy working group there will be no reason for them to take industrial action."

Both the National Union of Teachers, whose conference starts today and the NASUWT union has voted to boycott excessive meetings and other bureaucracy from the start of the summer term. The moderate ATL is backing industrial action over workload as a last resort.

Mr Byers said "We want teachers to concentrate on raising standards and providing high-quality education. We do not want them to be diverted into becoming paper-pushers."

Mr Byers said specific measures would be outlined over the next few days and warned that disruption to government policies would not be tolerated.

Earlier, Peter Smith, ATL general secretary, told the conference that efforts to cut paperwork were taking too long to filter down to the classroom.

A survey of 4,000 youngsters found 62 per cent thought teaching was too stressful to consider as a career. Mr Smith said: "Isn't it interesting when the pupils in the class now understand the stress of teaching them. It's not only no good for teachers, it's no good for pupils either."

Puttnam fears for arts

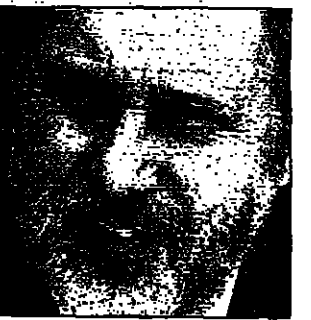
LORD PUTTNAM yesterday attacked a key plank of the Government's drive to raise school standards, claiming too much emphasis on the three Rs could squeeze creativity out of the classroom, writes Ben Russell.

The Oscar-winning film producer, a key member of the School Standards Taskforce, warned that a "painting-by-numbers" approach to teaching would deprive children of a well-rounded schooling. He said: "I believe we face a real danger at the moment, the danger of al-

lowing arts education to be marginalised - unnecessarily sacrificed at the altar of the numeracy and literacy targets."

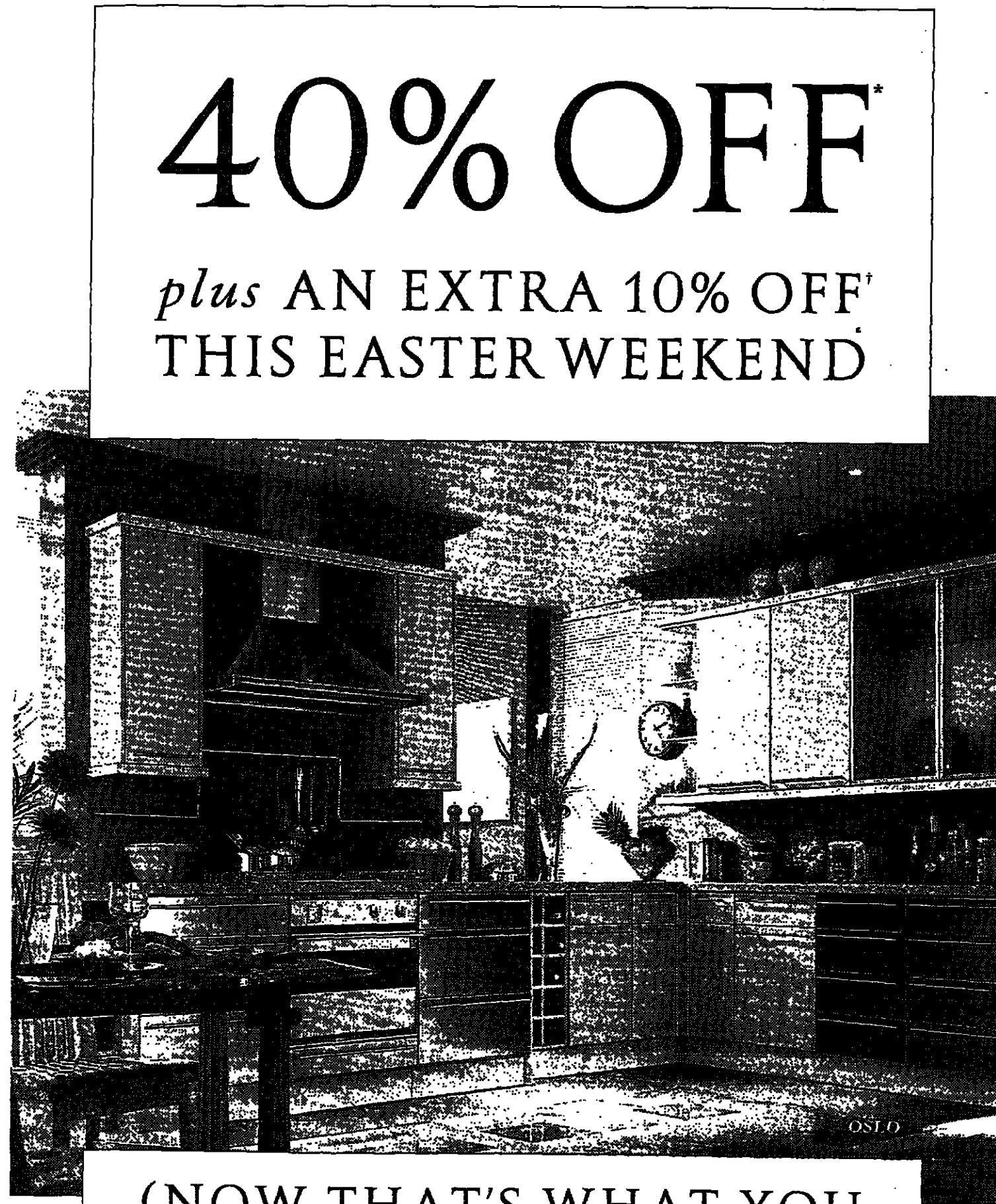
He told the conference that it would be wrong to cut the school curriculum down to a bare minimum of subjects and deprive children of the arts.

He said: "They can no longer be viewed as a lightweight diversion from the more taxing serious subjects of maths and science. I believe that a child who is not exposed to the riches of the arts is like a



Lord Puttnam: Warning note

flower without sunshine." It was also important "to ensure that every child leaves school with a rock solid foundation in the basic skills".



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TESCO

How FBI agent sent his son to Death Row

By David Osborne
in New York

THEY DO not come much more dedicated than John Cook. Dedicated as a lawman - in his home city of Macon, Georgia, he was an FBI agent for 29 years - as a Christian and as a father. Never could he have imagined how those three decent loyalties would one day rip him, his life and his family apart.

For almost three decades, Mr Cook, 55, would have these words for his children as he left home each morning. "I'm going out to make the streets of America safe for little children, pretty women and old dogs". Glib words for sure, said with tongue half in cheek, but words he earnestly believed in.

One time, Mr Cook and his colleagues failed the city. That was the night of 2 January 1995, when two university students were shot dead as they sat in their car in a lovers' lane area at nearby Lake Juliette. It was only on 4 December 1996, that the Macon police, through gun-sale records, found a suspect. He lived in a trailer near the lake. Name: Andrew Cook.

Andrew was John Cook's son, now 23, and that was the beginning of the agent's nightmare. That day, he received a phone call from Andrew. This is how Mr Cook later recalled asking his son about the night of the murders.

"He was hesitant, and finally said, 'Daddy, I can't tell you. You're one of them, a cop'. I said, 'Andy, I'm your father. Do you know anything?'" As the conversation proceeded, the boy said that yes, he did. Next,

Andrew admitted he had been at the scene. Then, girding himself, John Cook asked the fateful question. "Did you shoot them?" Andrew said that he had.

It was a moment, Mr Cook recalled, that "wrenched my heart out. I felt like the world crashed in on me". But what was to ensue would prove more painful still. Unable to put aside his commitment to the law and to God, even for his own child, he accompanied the boy the next day to turn himself in.

Two weeks ago, Andrew
'I was looking for evil out the front door and it came in the back and caught my son'
.....

Cook went on trial for two counts of first degree murder. Because of that one conversation - the telephone confession - John Cook found himself in court as the star witness for the prosecution.

The trial, in Macon's courthouse, lasted barely a week. With the words of the father in its ears as well as DNA evidence produced by the prosecution, the jury took two hours to reach its verdict: guilty. Judge Johnnie Caldwell said that the killing of the two young people, Michelle Cartagena, 19, and Grant Hendrickson, 20, was the most senseless he had ever seen.

One more task remained for

the distraught father: to plead with the jury in the sentencing hearing the next day not to spare his son from execution. Moving the court to tears and crying himself, he said: "I was busy looking out the front door for evil. But it came in the back door and consumed my son."

He went on: "Yesterday, I sat here and talked to you as the cop, and now I want to talk to you as the father." Asking jurors to accept that there had to be a "kernel of value, of goodness" deep in his son, he concluded: "I knew it would probably be my words that would send him to the electric chair."

He had guessed right. Andrew Cook's confession, given in trust from a son to a father, was too much for the jury to ignore: it showed no hesitation in recommending the death sentence. Judge Caldwell duly obliged and Andrew Cook is now on Georgia's Death Row.

Cook Sr, who resigned from the FBI in February and is now an investigator in the local district attorney's office, has since told the *Atlanta Constitution* that he survived the trial "not because I am any hero or have special courage. You do what you have to, and I have a strong belief in God."

"God is not finished with the final chapter in any of our lives. I don't know what the final chapter will be for Andy's life, but somehow, somewhere, there will be a purpose."

Does he regret reporting that December telephone call to the police? No. But, he adds, "I probably would not have gone into such detail that I would be the star witness against him."



Sacred path: Priests from the Latin Church take part in a procession yesterday after the traditional washing of the feet ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City in preparation for the Easter holiday
Photograph: AP

Karadzic 'preparing to surrender'

By Rupert Cornwell

IT appeared yesterday that the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, was preparing to surrender to the United Nations court in The Hague to face war crimes charges. He is believed to have fled his stronghold in Pale but his whereabouts could not be confirmed. Mr Karadzic faces two counts of genocide for his part in the massacres of Muslims during the 1992/95 Bosnian war.

A Western diplomatic source said that a negotiating process had been going on for some time and Karadzic could be giving himself up to the war crimes tribunal in The Hague in "days or weeks".

"Karadzic has been in touch indicating that he is thinking seriously of giving himself up and there have even been a couple of incidents recently where that was expected but he apparently got cold feet He has sent signals that he wants certain conditions," the source said.

Asked if Karadzic had been in indirect contact with the tribunal, which has indicted him on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, the source said there was "a good chance of that since he apparently realises his only hope of obtaining special conditions is to surrender".

A Foreign Office spokesman confirmed that Nato's most wanted man appeared to have left Pale, 10 miles outside Sarajevo, along with his private

security force of some 400 men. "All I can say is that we haven't forgotten the indictments, that his place is in The Hague, and with that size of guard, it shouldn't be hard to track him down," the spokesman said.

French intelligence sources told *Le Monde* that Mr Karadzic had fled Bosnia last November and was hiding in an eastern European country, probably Belarus. He had hired two American lawyers who were discussing the terms under which he might surrender.

The net has been closing ever tighter around Mr Karadzic in recent days, starting with last week's unannounced and deliberately intimidatory visit to his headquarters by hundreds of Nato troops, backed by tanks and armoured

personnel carriers. Then on Wednesday came the arrest of two indicted Bosnian Serbs suspects in a part of Bosnia patrolled by British troops.

Of the 74 people publicly indicted with Bosnian war crimes, 25 are now in custody in the Hague. But the key targets are Mr Karadzic and his military commander Ratko Mladic, who also faces two genocide counts. Mladic is believed to be still in Bosnia, at a heavily protected military base.

"Karadzic's days at large are becoming shorter and shorter," Carlos Westendorp, the top Western envoy to Bosnia, declared this week. "He may be in Russia or Serbia. But the only safe country for him right now is North Korea."

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six of the
seven seats
occasionally.

Sharan

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Australians face poll tainted by race row

By Robert Milliken
in Sydney

AUSTRALIA faces the grim prospect of a general election based on race after the federal government yesterday rejected parliament's changes to its controversial legislation that limits Aborigines' rights to claim title to their native lands.

After months of bitter negotiations with Aborigines and parliamentary horse-trading, John Howard, the Prime Minister, yesterday declared "unacceptable" amendments to the legislation on which he has staked his political reputation, and which he now seems likely to use as a trigger to dissolve both houses of parliament and call a general election. "If the issue is to be resolved, it may be necessary to have a double dissolution," he said.

Aboriginal leaders denounced the government, branded its legislation as racist and walked out of talks in Canberra, the capital, on Thursday night. Gladys Tybingoompa, an elder of the Wik people of north Queensland, said: "Today, to the whole of the world, especially to the nation of Australia, I say this to you: it's come to a disgrace. This is called the walkaway, the last time the message is given to you, to the Australians. Clap your hands together like the sea of hands to give support to us all." Australia's leading Aboriginal official, Gaiji Djerikura, head of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' Commission, said: "It seems we can have no faith in the government to protect our existing rights."

The racial clash has come about over the Howard government's native title legislation known as the Wik bill. It was introduced to parliament last year after the High Court ruled, in a case that the Wik people brought before it, that Aborigines could claim native title over



John Howard: Playing the race card again

pastoral leases. Such leases were first granted in colonial times, to allow farming in regions of outback Australia the size of small European countries. Until the High Court's Wik judgment in 1996, farmers had had exclusive access to such lands, where tribal Aborigines had been pushed off generations ago.

Most farmers claimed that the court ruling would ruin their livelihoods, and called on Mr Howard's conservative government to extinguish native title rights altogether. The government responded with legislation that restricted native title claims. Its Bill was passed in the House of Representatives, the lower house, last year, but was amended in the Senate, the upper house, where the coalition does not have a majority. Mr Howard re-submitted the Bill to the Senate, which refused to back down on three of its key amendments on Wednesday night.

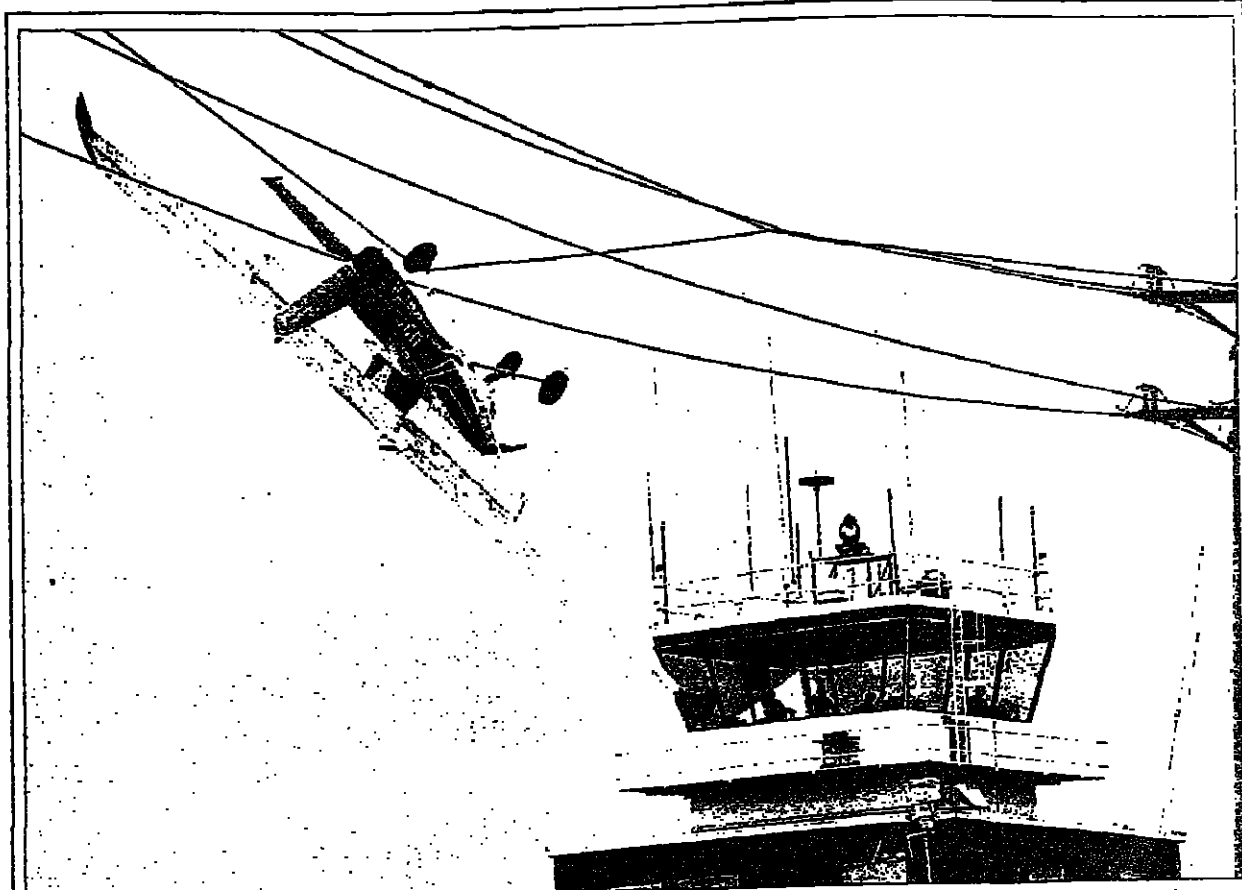
These amendments allowed Aborigines the right to negotiate with mining companies on pastoral leases (which the original bill disallowed); struck out a "sunset clause" that disallowed any native title claims after six years; and made the Bill subject to Australia's Racial Discrimination Act, not exempt as

the government wanted. Although the Senate had compromised on seven other points, Mr Howard yesterday pronounced its three amendments unacceptable and returned the Bill to the lower house, where it is now "laid aside".

Mr Howard has until October to call an election, which he is determined to do in the hope of getting the Bill passed by a joint sitting of both houses of a new parliament. But, despite the Prime Minister's claim that such an election would not be race-based, his government's insensitive treatment of Aborigines over this and other issues would inevitably feature prominently and cause Australia irreparable international damage.

Mr Howard joined political battle on another front on Wednesday when Patrick Stevedores, Australia's second-largest stevedore company, sacked its entire staff of 1,600 dock workers and replaced them with contract non-union labour. The dramatic sackings were the climax of a waterfront dispute that has been simmering for months, in which Mr Howard's government is supporting the employers' moves to break the power of the dock workers' union.

The Prime Minister described the sackings as "a defining moment in Australia's industrial relations history". Like his refusal to back down over the native title Bill, he sees the waterside confrontation as an issue that could give his government a tough image as it moves towards an election. But both flashpoints are huge political gambles.



Wing and a prayer: A Cessna 150 plane hangs upside down with the pilot still inside after it flew into power lines when trying to land at Boeing Field airport in Seattle yesterday. The pilot, who was not injured, was later rescued by firemen using a crane

Photograph: AP

Bognor Birdman competition, August, Bognor Pier.



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ALLIANCE
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Yeltsin choice for PM enters political fray

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

THE 35-year-old neophyte whom Boris Yeltsin has hurriedly thrust on to the world stage as his chosen prime minister enjoys dangerous combat sports, but today's bout is likely to be an exception. The odds are that Sergei Kiriyenko will get a bloody nose in the first round of his confirmation battle with Russia's parliament.

As the bespectacled former provincial banker enters the fray, brandishing a conciliatory economic programme which he hopes will change its mind, he will be confronted by an indignant parliament which - in large part - views him as a hopelessly inexperienced lightweight.

At the ringside, eagerly cheering him on, sits a president in a fix: Boris Yeltsin, whose sacking of Viktor Chernomyrdin and his entire government last month has plunged Russia into political mayhem at a time when its underlying economic problems are as acute as ever.

A reminder of that came yesterday when hundreds of thousands of Russians took part in demonstrations in yet another protest over late pay and pensions. As the red flags fluttered against grey spring skies, there were plenty of calls for Mr Yeltsin's resignation.

Supporters of Mr Kiriyenko estimate that he will be about 75 ballots short of the 226 votes

he needs to be confirmed by the State Duma (lower house). He will make a speech, which will support reforms but with a gentler touch, with more support for the poor and industry.

If this fails to persuade the house, Mr Yeltsin - who cannot appoint a cabinet until he has a prime minister - is expected to resubmit his nomination immediately. If this is rejected three times, the Communist-dominated legislature must be dissolved and an election held. However, few expect the issue to reach that point; it seems likely to be settled by a trade-off - the promise, perhaps, of cabinet jobs for the Communists.

No matter what the outcome, this political drama is one that has done no good to Mr Yeltsin. International confidence in Russia - never strong - has been further dented. Despite years of Western hype, the economy remains critical. True, there have been a few achievements: annual inflation is down to about 11 per cent; the ruble is stable, and there are symptoms of growth this year, albeit minimal. But the myriad woes that came with the transition to a market economy have been compounded by several unexpected blows, particularly falling oil prices and the Asian financial crisis. Russia is still in the doldrums; now was not the moment for another presidential display of the unpredictability and flamboyance which he so enjoys.

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(centre spread, tabloid section.)

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The Vatican would rather forget Ludmilla Javarova. In the dark days of communism, she was ordained secretly. Peter Stanford meets an exceptional woman

The priest Rome can't embrace

ON EASTER SUNDAY, Rome will be swash with priests from every corner of the globe, gathered in all their finery to celebrate the most important day in the Christian calendar with Pope John Paul II. At the same time, in a tiny flat in a soulless block in Brno in the Czech Republic, a single priest in everyday clothes will celebrate a solitary liturgy behind closed doors. At St Peter's, it will be an all-male occasion. In Brno, the celebrant will be female, 68-year-old Ludmilla Javarova, the Catholic Church's first woman priest in modern times.

Her case has caused consternation in the Vatican. For this is a woman who was ordained by a bishop in good standing with Rome and who cannot therefore be lightly dismissed. Moreover, in taking holy orders at a time when Czechoslovakia's communist rulers were intent on suppressing the church, she risked her life for the institution that now wants to disown her. Priests were routinely imprisoned, tortured and even killed behind the Iron Curtain.

Javarova and her bishop, the charismatic Felix Davidek, believed that the communists' long-term goal was to destroy the church. To guarantee the survival of the priesthood in the face of such an onslaught, married men and women were ordained. A total of six women were said to be involved, but Javarova is the only one to have spoken to anyone about it.

Rome refuses to give any credence to her claims. What-

ever Davidek's reasons, the authorities say, he simply did not have the authority to break a centuries-old rule. Perhaps what disturbs Rome most about Javarova's one-woman crusade is its uncanny parallels to that of Florence Tim O'Li. Ordained Anglicanism's first woman priest, in war-torn Hong Kong in 1944, by a bishop unable to communicate with the outside world and fearful for the fate of the church, once peace had broken out she became the icon around whom campaigners rallied for their long-running - and ultimately successful - battle for women priests.

Brno is in the industrial heartland of the Czech Republic. My interpreter finally managed to locate Block 23 among the concrete complexes. Ludmilla Javarova peered out nervously: her thin, pinched face, with hair pulled back severely into an insubstantial bun, is reminiscent of one of the more tragic figures in Maggie Smith's repertoire.

She finally let us into her two-roomed flat. We couldn't stay long, she said, looking nervously away as if she was hiding someone in the next room. Publicity is the last thing she wants, she explained. "It will damage the church, me and the memory of Davidek."

I couldn't help but wonder why then she had agreed to my request for an interview. Dressed in a yellow sleeveless blouse and a thick, straight brown-purple skirt, she wore a simple religious medal around her neck.

Her face alternated between the passivity of a nun and the animation of a politician on a street hustling. When the latter was more dominant, I started to notice little touches - earrings, a touch of red dye in her greying hair, bright red carpet slippers. She makes no attempt to play down her femininity.

Conscious that the only picture in the room was of Davidek, I asked if she had a family. "No," she fired back, "the Church is my family." The local parish? "No. The underground church. We remain close. Most do not talk with outsiders about their experiences."

Javarova first met Davidek when she was a girl and he was curate in her home village near Brno. Between 1948 and 1962, he was imprisoned, like so many other priests. The collapse of the Prague Spring of 1968, and with it the chance for greater religious toleration, prompted Davidek to think of alternative and radical ways to ensure the future of the church as it faced renewed persecution.

"It was an extraordinary time," Ludmilla recalls, a resistance fighter reflecting on her war-time service. "You cannot understand. For us it was a question of survival. We feared the church would not survive."

In 1970, Davidek preached a radical gospel at a clandestine meeting of the underground church. His ideas split the gathering. He wanted to ordain those the authorities were least likely to suspect of being priests - married men and women. The logic was compelling. The com-



Ludmilla Javarova: "It was an extraordinary time. For us it was a question of survival. We feared the church would not survive"

traordinary. There has been a correspondence and she clearly - and it would seem - entertains hopes that Rome may one day welcome her, so she will not be drawn. Friends in the underground church, however, report that she still says mass privately.

Some - including senior officials in Rome trying to sort out the post-revolutionary Czech church - say Davidek was a madman. Is it, I suggest, that the Vatican does not consider Davidek to be a proper bishop? "Never". She shakes her head violently, outraged at such a slander. The Vatican, she points out, grants special rights to bishops in times of persecution so that they can secretly make new bishops without the usual recourse to Rome. So when Davidek was consecrated a bishop by Bishop Jan Blaha in 1968, it was done with Rome's full approval, if not knowledge.

Surely now, I ask, there is no need to be frightened? "I still cannot trust people," Javarova said, looking away, suddenly vulnerable. There are still bad people out there. She is retreating into her shell. Even some of the men who worked most closely with Javarova and Davidek have noted this fear in her. "It's very hard for her," says one. "She's accepted neither as a priest nor as a woman."

A fuller version of this interview appears in Peter Stanford's *The She-Pope: A Quest for the Truth Behind the Mystery of Pope Joan*, published by Heinemann on 14 April, price £16.99.

munists may have despised the Catholic Church, but they took it at face value when it said ordination was only for celibate males. For Davidek, tradition could be sacrificed for survival.

"We learned to trust no one. If they betrayed us, we faced prison, death. We led double lives. In the day I would teach and then at nights we would have our meetings. I

would have to stay up all night to prepare my school work for the next day, in case anyone was suspicious. No one knew details about the other priests, except Bishop Davidek."

Javarova's primary role was to visit women prisoners - including nuns. The authorities denied prisoners access to priests and hence the sacraments, but because she was a

woman, they did not suspect and let her come and go freely. So successful was her disguise, that she began to act as go-between with the underground priests and Davidek. If the bishop held all the information about his network of priests in his head, she knew almost as much. She had the power of life or death over many.

Since Davidek's death in

1988, Javarova has understandably experienced a terrible sense of loss - of his guidance, his willingness to go it alone, his ability to perhaps explain the situation to Rome and make it acceptable.

Does she still consider that she is a priest? "The Vatican says I am not." But what does she think? "The Vatican says I am not, that the times were ex-

How dolphins break the silence

Phil Davison reports from Key Biscayne on the marine park where disabled children learn to talk



Making waves: Joseph Stevenson at the Therapy Centre Photograph: Philippe Diederich

IN HIS home in Feltham, Middlesex, eight-year-old Joseph Stevenson cannot watch TV like other children. It is too noisy for his ultra-sensitive ears, the abrupt change of images too confusing. His parents, Jim and Sheila, have built an extension on to their home to allow them to watch TV, and they avoid using a normal refrigerator or electric kettle because of the noise.

Joseph is autistic, with a short attention span and a vocabulary of only 30 words spoken one at a time and rarely. Until two years ago, at the age of six, he had never uttered a word. Then, after swimming with dolphins in Florida, he surprised his parents by blurring out the word "in". He wanted to get back in the water.

This week, Joseph was back in Florida with his parents, who hoped further "dolphin therapy" might not only add to his vocabulary but also increase his attention span, so that they can better communicate with him.

In a royal blue wetsuit and tightly-strapped into a lifebelt, Joseph looked a little uncomfortable as a baby dolphin called Ripley pushed him and Florida occupational therapist Natasha Bravo across the placid surface of a turquoise lagoon where the old TV series *Flipper* was first filmed.

Joseph kicked out and slapped the water but his mum assured me he was having a good time and that was just his way of interacting with Ripley. "He does that with dogs when he likes them," she said. "Autistic children rely on routine. Today, strangers are telling him

what to do. In a couple of days, it will be part of his routine."

The Dolphin Human Therapy Centre here, behind the popular Seaquarium in a natural but filtered lagoon with a sand and rock bottom, treats children for assorted neurological problems, mainly cerebral palsy. Down's Syndrome and autism, by letting them interact with friendly, intelligent dolphins. Its founder, 53-year-old Glasgow-born neuropsychologist Dr Dave Nathanson, is proud of its successes but warns that the Centre cannot cure brain damage or perform miracles. Some of its past clients disagree.

"It is a miracle ... a dream come true ... a fairytale come true ... like seeing magic happening before your eyes," Tabitha Brice, of Weston-Super-Mare, said last month after her eight-year-old son, Nikki, pointed at the pool-sized lagoon and uttered his first-ever word - the same as Joseph's - "in". Nikki had always had the physical ability to speak, but had been starved of oxygen at birth and his vocal chords had never responded to the messages from his brain.

Not everyone agrees with Mrs Brice. "It sounds pretty

hokey to me," says Dr Bernard Rimland of the Autism Research Institute in San Diego, California. "There is no scientific evidence at all that using dolphins is helpful. The reputable people in the field simply feel that the kids like the dolphins and it's a recreational thing."

Putting hope before such criticisms, families pay \$6,200 for the recommended two-week therapy course - nine weekday sessions of 40 minutes each. At present exchange rates, that's around £3,750, and does not include accommodation, air fares or any other costs. "I'm putting it all on credit cards," said Pauline Pearce, from Watford, whose eight-year-old son, Miles, who has Asperger Syndrome, a form of autism, was also doing therapy this week.

"He's very logical," said Mrs Pearce "but the social part is difficult. If Miles were in a native environment, like in the jungle, he'd probably be revered as the local witch doctor. But in our social environment, he's a misfit. He already speaks quite well, so I'm not expecting any dramatic change here."

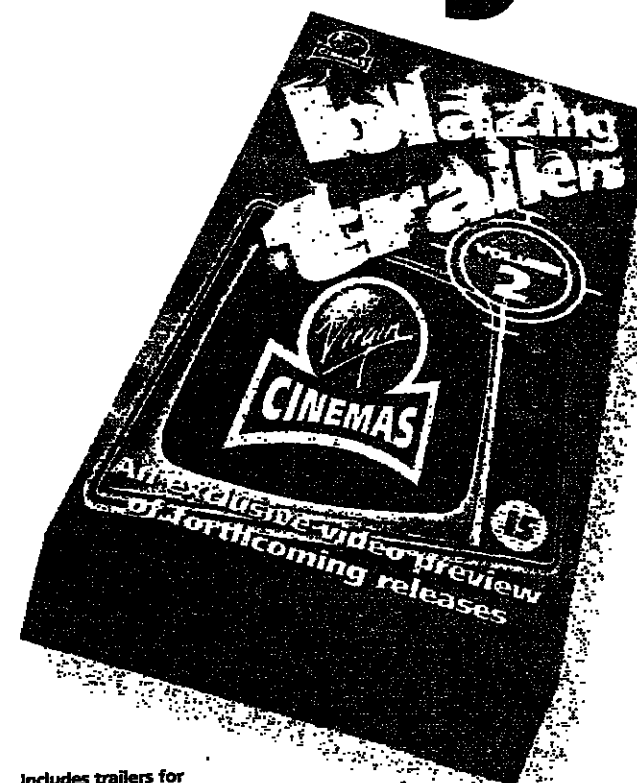
One of Dr Nathanson's problems is the cost of dolphins, currently around \$100,000

(£60,000) for a baby. Here, he leases his eight dolphins from the Seaquarium. "You used to need a permit to let people swim with dolphins, but not any more. Now everyone's setting up swim-with-the-dolphins places and you can't buy dolphins for love nor money."

Over the past decade, Dr Nathanson's centre, formerly in the Florida Keys, has treated more than 800 children from 39 countries - from Australia and Azerbaijan to Kenya and Kuwait, but mostly from the US, Britain or Germany - and claims few, if any children go away without making progress. His staff claim 97 per cent success. "We routinely see kids speak here for the first time," says Dr Nathanson, who left Scotland at the age of three, spent his early career in New York and moved to Florida 25 years ago.

"There is no magic bullet. This is not a miracle. If a child comes here with Down's Syndrome or brain damage, we can't cure that. It's scientific therapy, with a lot of love and the involvement of the family. "There are three things that increase a child's attention span - animals, music and water. We have two out of the three here."

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CRYPTIC CLUES

By Mass CONCISE CLUES

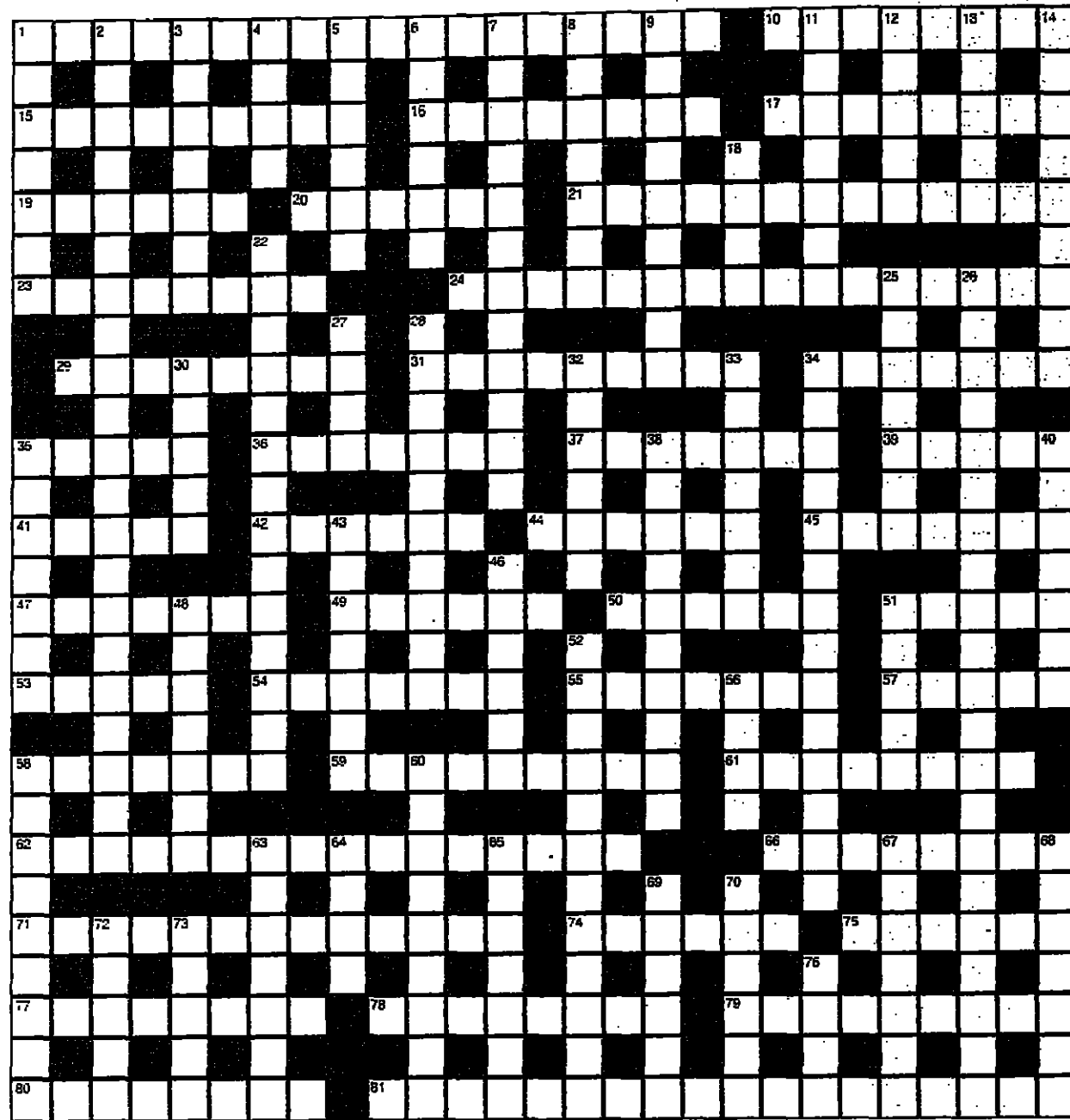
ACROSS

- 1 Learn from experience? (4,8,6)
- 10 Hot up in California during most of Easter, maybe (8)
- 15 Showing buds, burgeoning in season (9)
- 16 Soldiers on square, wearing new stripes (8)
- 17 Cash used in high deposit (8)
- 19 Repaired shoe, as listed (6)
- 20 Disparages theologian, vocally (6)
- 21 A member of RSPCA? (7,6)
- 23 Colourful application showing taste - including PS, note (8)
- 24 A hillside address (n.2,3,5)
- 29 Stake with bound animal (8)
- 31 How impertinent for a lawyer! (9)
- 34 Openings, initial sign of green environs (7)
- 35 Pike (English) caught in Spring, on river (5)
- 36 Hitches back into East side of Dublin from town in Antrim (7)
- 37 Rider in Spring picking first of daffodils, I see (7)
- 39 Oak's earliest green is manifest (5)
- 41 Right amount of publicity (5)
- 42 Articles with cracks (6)
- 44 Fast before end of Lent, accordingly going without (6)
- 45 Sheep driven to American city of old (7)
- 47 Spartan's bitter about extremity of Greeks (7)
- 49 Openings of English plants, during Spring, vary (6)
- 50 Painting most of green bed? No time (6)
- 51 Rook in grass, or some other bird (5)
- 53 Forward sign of Spring, it's said (5)
- 54 Enjoying Spring in festive Castile (7)
- 55 Outgoing types, you might say (7)
- 57 Arrange treat (5)
- 58 Weathers ease around island at onset of Spring (7)
- 59 Woman has say, ripped off in shop (9)
- 61 Discharge energy with work (8)

- 62 Characteristic of a traditional chair? (6-10)
- 66 Odd cow amongst Spring's Alpine scenes (8)
- 71 Londoner is involved with rig: it should promote an attachment (9,4)
- 74 Radiant face of Spring - before dark (6)
- 75 Devotion evoked by star without measure (6)
- 77 Set off for college in time (8)
- 78 Mineral, yell-ow one, clogging pipe (8)
- 79 Robust leaves, returning: staple feature of greenery (9)
- 80 Devoted regular (8)
- 81 Location in which one wretched plot came to fruition (6,2,10)

DOWN

- 1 Like tops of cherry in bud, about Easter (7)
- 2 They're progressive to some degree (1,4,7)
- 3 Audibly drunk before ten, maybe he'll get lectured (7)
- 4 Pipe from rook, I gathered (4)
- 5 Instruments with mouthpieces (6)
- 6 Count upon former Conservative getting into favour (6)
- 7 Poaching eggs? (5-7)
- 8 Belief that 'Soul' is inherent in 'Rock'? (7)
- 9 With vessel capsizing, one tears around for life preservers (9)
- 11 Stone form decapitated in secret manoeuvre (7)
- 12 Spring's confirmed by movements in Aries (5)
- 13 Factor in mature holy writ (5)
- 14 Submit drink is causing gut problem (9)
- 18 Look for castles around Italy (4)
- 22 They're so class-conscious (1,4)
- 25 Precursor of the Jumbo type? (7)
- 26 A republic responsible for famous Easteride antic (6,6,2,7)
- 27 Spring quietly drifting over Southern fields (4)



- 28 A patch, but easy to cultivate with grass (6,4)
- 30 Bird's pecked top off rue (5)
- 32 Draws home with dogs (6)
- 33 Mad hares, at last, features of Spring (7)
- 34 Grand ancient plants bordering very good glowing views (6,8)
- 35 Fruits (not April's first) and birds from abroad (7)
- 38 Produced tangle? Rambling red rose did (10)
- 40 Growths on trees, in raised grounds, fed by sap (7)
- 43 Sword is lifted, heralding short expression of dismay (7)
- 46 You'll find us going after clipped pot flower in Spring (6)
- 48 Iscariot's ultimate grounds for betrayal (7)
- 51 Hands over eggs when told (5)
- 52 Spore's active spell, promoting recovery (12)
- 56 Picture of Easteride - as phobias (4)
- 58 Hearts in sporadic bursts, full of the joys of Spring (9)
- 60 The primate sounds parisian (9)
- 63 Shower gets me, abroad, then clears up (7)
- 64 Hacks nettles (4)
- 65 Sister's standing, with a Parisian, in new bonnet (7)
- 67 Small band's entered festivity (7)
- 68 Bright disc seen from bridge over most of valley (7)
- 69 One winding lane fellow finds verdant (2,4)
- 70 Time (Spring) will generate any collection of plant cells (6)
- 72 Reveal Paul's last letter's turned up (3,2)
- 73 He's from Bern? Stuttgart (5)
- 76 Highest tree needs lopping (4)

- 1 Both eggs plain to see (anag) (9,9)
- 10 Parcels goods before retail (8)
- 15 Reverberation (9)
- 16 Widespread (8)
- 17 Type of lid (5,3)
- 19 Demand (6)
- 20 American state (6)
- 21 Flimsy (13)
- 23 Happy state (8)
- 24 Come off best (4,3,4,5)
- 29 A fish (8)
- 31 Set in motion (9)
- 34 Castilian nobleman (7)
- 35 A fight (3-2)
- 36 Prickly plant (7)
- 37 Trade ban (7)
- 39 Engaged (5)
- 41 Block of metal (5)
- 42 Morsel (6)
- 44 Spite (6)
- 45 Reactionary person (4,3)
- 46 Backache (7)
- 49 Nag her (anag) (6)
- 50 Rivulet (6)
- 51 Portents (5)
- 53 Scandinavians (5)
- 54 Not so dense (7)
- 55 Castle (7)
- 57 Lock (5)
- 58 Avidly (7)
- 59 Transient (9)
- 61 Marinating (8)
- 62 An aid in solving crimes (8,8)
- 66 Burgeons (8)
- 71 Attacking soccer player (6-7)
- 74 Without clothes (6)
- 75 Nuptial (6)
- 77 Modernising (8)
- 78 Remove from a fixed position (8)
- 79 Industrial waste (5,4)
- 80 To loiter aimlessly (8)
- 81 Near blue sea's margin (anag) (18)
- 1 Ministering to (7)
- 2 Employee in a theatre (9,5-7)
- 3 Passes down an heirloom, say (5,2)
- 4 Aquarium (4)
- 5 Frozen summit (6)
- 6 Preoccupy (6)
- 7 Eclipsed (12)
- 8 Planet (7)
- 9 A major-domo (9)
- 11 Crete, is (anag) (7)
- 12 To groom oneself vainly (5)
- 13 Desert plains (3)
- 14 Tomb (9)
- 18 Old Greek coin (4)
- 22 In a showy manner (14)
- 25 Tanned material (7)
- 26 Thomas Hardy novel (5,3,9,4)
- 27 Opposed to (4)
- 28 Gives prominence to (10)
- 30 Sit on a perch (5)
- 32 Free from obligation (6)
- 33 Throw into confusion (7)
- 34 Gentilly (4-10)
- 35 Suppressed (7)
- 38 A table herb (anag) (10)
- 40 Abhors (7)
- 43 Block of houses (7)
- 46 Northern Irish county (6)
- 48 Runner-up (4-3)
- 51 Arrangement (3-2)
- 52 Emphasising (7,5)
- 56 Compass point (4)
- 58 In force (9)
- 60 Hot in yard (anag) (9)
- 63 Spanish princess (7)
- 64 European currency (4)
- 65 Mark under a letter (7)
- 67 Prior disease of sheep (7)
- 68 Supports for broken bones (7)
- 69 Skin disease (6)
- 70 Bother (6)
- 72 Knotty (5)
- 73 Bad-tempered (5)
- 76 Snatch (4)

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Why Mandy won't come out to play



JOHN LYTTLE

AT AN editorial conference here on Tuesday morning, a member of staff looked askance at that day's Oliver James column on Peter Mandelson and wondered why James had outed Mandelson as a homosexual. Came the reply: Oliver James hadn't. That dirty deed was committed some time ago by the *News of the World*, for obvious, odious reasons.

And, no, James wasn't slyly exploiting tabloid affronts to privacy and decency. He has points to make. Unlike Bryan Gould's autobiography, which reviled Mandelson as "queeny", giving the *Sun* the chance to run

"Gould 'Outs' Mandelson" in hypocritical, ut-ut tones. And, as a matter of record, *Gay Times* often mentions Mandelson's sexuality and has not once been rebuked by the man himself, or his office. Indeed, relations have always been very cordial, even up to the last election, when *Gay Times*' request for an in-depth interview was very cordially rejected.

Still, one realises why the staff member raised the question - the Minister Without Portfolio's homosexuality exists in a limbo between secret, open secret and historical amnesia: everyone is apparently aware of it without being quite certain how - and also why Peter Mandelson declined to be interviewed by *Gay Times*. Mandelson clearly doesn't want his sexuality to be anything other than his own business. He does not wish it to be a dreary "issue", a punctured political football, a broken stick to beat himself or the Party or the Blessed Tony with. It might be... awkward.

New Labour has been at some pains to present itself as "gay-friendly", and no matter how currently cosy the Government's arranged marriage with the *Mail*, *Times* etc. in the right-wing press, tradition and prejudice (much the same thing) forever translate the liberal sentimentality of gay-friendly into the sinister suggestion of Gay Mafia.

The fact that New Labour's "gay-friendliness" has extended to fighting against gays in the military and equal partnership rights in the European Courts would seem to dismiss such a paranoid Polaroid of Mandelson and Co's influence, but facts, naturally, don't come into it. Knowing this, why add to your own burdens or allow unnecessary obstacles to be placed in the path of possible political progress for gay men and women? All round, best to maintain a dignified silence. Which is, after all, a matter of choice.

Except Peter Mandelson

has no choice. Whatever the personal and/or professional motives for keeping Mum (the good people of his Hartlepool constituency? the still-burning embers of Labour's hutch, blue-collar boorishness? the Prime Minister's sheer boredom?) his sexuality is... Here we encounter difficulties - semantic



New Labour has been at pains to present itself as 'gay-friendly', but in the right-wing press, tradition and prejudice forever translate gay-friendly into Gay Mafia

and otherwise. While Mandelson's homosexuality is on record, it is treated as shadowy, almost, ashamed. In a dumb way, this is very clever. Silence, dignified or fearful, can be employed against you. Mandelson is nicknamed Mandy and must ignore the sniggering moniker; surely lack of response means he is hiding something? Actually, Mandelson might simply think his day has better uses than rising to sinking bait.

This is, however, immaterial. The fish in the barrel's re-

fusal to bite need not interfere with easy sport. Watch. If I type "Mandelson and gay" into this newspaper's library database, 111 stories appear. All hints, nudges and dull, dull, dull innuendo, Richard Littlejohn doing cracks about friends of Dorothy and friends of Mandy not being mutually exclusive.

as putrid, because, as previously noted, Mandelson has already been "outed".

Would making a clean breast of it - the language of harassment is contagious - kill the smirks? No. If Mandelson were to lose the test of wills and admit - or confess, as Littlejohn would doubtless phrase it - then he would at some future point be accused of "haunting it". Catch 22. No-win situation. Cowards' methods of punishment are multifarious, as any gay man thought to have power can tell you.

Perhaps Mandelson should have a chat with Chris Smith, who lives the very opposite of his own predicament. Smith's open homosexuality is now almost never mentioned. No fun there. Instead, the utter unreasonableness of attacks on his "competence" grow. Dub it over-compensation and skim Richard Ingram in the *Observer*: enraged and obsessed or what? Moral: in or out, some will always shake you all about.

Though not for much longer. The times are anti-blood sports. Smith's foes have had to drop the flag-baiting. Mandelson's queer situation may signal a last hoorah; no wonder name-calling bullies are making the cat-and-mouse most of it. Wouldn't it be funny if a final, mad, full-frontal attack finally gained Peter Mandelson public empathy? Wouldn't it be amazing if his enemies took note of this column in a manner they have revealingly failed to do with Oliver James' and put Peter Mandelson - and us erstwhile, inadvertent collaborators - out of their misery?

Couldn't they learn to hate Mandelson for who he is and not for what he may do in bed? Or are they far too busy gang-banging George Michael to pay due attention?

From next week, John Lytle's column can be found in the Independent's second section, *The Eve*, on Thursdays

ARTS ON SATURDAY



As a TV documentary attacks the reputation of the world's greatest male baller dancer, Louise Levene says there's no need to rubbish Rudolph

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Wotton House, Buckinghamshire: the south front drawn by Ptolemy Dean, 1994. Brunner saved the house from destruction, and restored it. Sir John Soane worked on Wotton in 1820-21, reducing it in height and transforming its interior

Elaine Brunner

HIGHLY perceptive, determined, and sometimes jolly difficult, Elaine Brunner was responsible for saving one of Sir John Soane's most remarkable country houses, and single-handedly organised the restoration of a Capability Brown landscape masterpiece.

The story is extraordinary. Like dozens of houses after the Second World War, Wotton House in Buckinghamshire was being demolished for its materials. No one even considered living in such places then. She arrived in 1957, chauffeured by an antique dealer friend in search of "spare" columns to go by her swimming pool. It must have been a grim sight. The copper roof stripped for salvage, the fireplaces all removed, a pond of water on the drawing-room floor. The bulldozers were standing by to clear the lot in a fortnight. The situation was intolerable.

She arranged for Wotton to

be bought for £6,000, to be paid in six annual instalments to the Buckinghamshire County Council. She telephoned her husband, Wing Commander Patrick Brunner, and apparently told him: "Darling, I have bought a house, and I just know you are going to love it."

Elaine Howlett was born in London in 1907. Her father, Richard Howlett, was King George V's valet from 1901 until his death (his outdoor duties including cooking the King's gun); as Superintendent of the King's Wardrobe, with Mr Tubb the Sergeant Footman, he preceded the bearer party in the King's funeral procession in 1936. Her mother was a Swiss dressmaker. Elaine's parents must have passed on a lifelong fascination with dressing up and practical application. She grew up in the aristocratic surroundings of St James's Palace: it can have been no surprise that

the child wanted to be a ballet dancer. Although she danced for Pavlova, this was not the area where Elaine would make her greatest contribution.

She married Patrick Brunner in 1933. A grandson of Sir John Brunner Bt, co-founder of Brunner Mond, one of the four companies that came together to form ICI in 1926, he was a film producer who served in the RAF during the war, apparently assisting in the drafting of Churchill's speeches. As for Elaine, her war was spent in the Oxford Police and Observer Corps, reportedly spotting enemy aircraft from an open-topped MG.

After the war, Patrick Brunner stood unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate for Beaconsfield, and it was from Seer Green, outside that comfortable and somewhat conventional town, that the Brunners left for Wotton—with reluctance on the part of her husband, who never

quite shared her enthusiasm for what he was apt to describe as a "barracks". After his death in 1966, Wotton took centre-stage for the rest of her life.

An early Georgian house, it was originally constructed for the Grenville family, who subsequently became the Dukes of Buckingham and inherited the vast and wealthy estate at nearby Stowe. But they never lost their affection for Wotton, and the family continued to be buried there. Tragedy struck in 1820 when the house was gutted by fire. Not for the last time, all seemed lost. But, without a day's delay, the great architect Sir John Soane was summoned.

Soane, at the height of his powers and maturity, was free to transform the interior of the house as he pleased, and nothing could contain his special exuberance. Stone staircases cantilever up and around, dramatic views emerge through

all three storeys, structural masonry is manipulated like paper. There is no other house like it.

But its breathtaking interiors fell out of fashion, and were encrusted in the Twenties with heavy fake panelling, which typically concealed rampant dry rot. Elaine Brunner had it all stripped out, often tearing it away herself, and rejoicing in the discovery of Soane's minimalist detailing beneath. The house was discreetly divided into flats, an innovative act at that time, securing rental income from a variety of cosmopolitan (and literary) tenants that would subsidise later work. She loved the house, and had little time for those that did not understand it or "feel" it. It became the perfect setting for extravagant fancy-dress parties and an exotic collection of antique dolls. Unfortunately she failed to buy the next-door south pavilion when it came up

for sale, and it remained in private hands, Sir Arthur Bryant giving way to Sir John Gielgud.

Having completed the house she turned to the estate. An expert had said "probably" Capability Brown. "Probably" was not the sort of word tolerated at Wotton, especially as the great mid-18th-century landscape gardener had been employed here by the Grenvilles before being sent to Stowe in 1740. Painstakingly, the little-known park, including a vast ornamental lake, was bought back from the surrounding farmers. If she could not persuade them to sell the land, she simply sought their permission to re-instate long-lost avenues of trees across it.

A 17-year-old apprentice recommended by a neighbour found himself being told to help reconstruct the ha-ha and then, when he had proved himself, to restore the five-arch

bridge, then the "Turkey" Temple, the Rotunda, the Octagon, the Palladian Bridge, the Grotto, and the China Island Bridge.

With the help of a local carpenter Michael Harrison, who stayed for 14 years and is still there, erected a portico made out of 1920s panelling removed from the house. The climax of the work was the reinstatement of Brown's Crescent Bridge, which was constructed of laminated timber from Finland, shipped over to Southampton, and driven with a police escort at slow speed to Wotton.

By now 90, Elaine Brunner was failing in energy, the restoration of the park nearly complete. She saw the Crescent Bridge only twice, carried there in a buggy. She had to content herself with what she could see in her mind, but was driven with glee that so much could be done without the endless National Trust committees and officials

involved in the restoration of the landscape at Stowe.

Every day champagne, smoked salmon and neat little trouser suits—she was stylish to the end, intolerant of fools and determined that the work, on which every estate penny was spent, should continue. The opening up of views in the park and restoration of Soane's great entrance dome are still to be done. She died peacefully at Wotton, and will be buried in the churchyard where her Grenville predecessors lie, and to whose works she has done proud. Wotton will pass to her daughter, April, and her husband David Gladstone.

Ptolemy Dean

Mary Elaine Howlett, conservationist: born London 5 December 1907; married 1933 Patrick Brunner (died 1966; one daughter); died Wotton Underwood, Buckinghamshire 5 April 1998.

Kate Bosse-Griffiths

THE LITERATURE and culture of Wales have been enriched by many people born beyond its borders but few have made a contribution as distinguished as that of Kate Bosse-Griffiths. She not only learnt Welsh but made it the language of her home and wrote extensively in it on topics not usually treated by writers for whom it is the mother-tongue.

Born in Wittenberg-am-Elbe, Luther's town, a little to the north of Leipzig in what was to become East Germany, Käthe Bosse was of partly Jewish parentage but grew up as a member of the Lutheran Church and in a family noted for its high culture and liberal views; her father was an eminent gynaecologist.

After receiving her secondary education at the local Gymnasium and studying at the University of Munich, where she took a doctorate in Classics and Egyptology in 1935, she joined

the staff of the Egyptology and Archaeology Department in the Berlin State Museums but was dismissed when it was discovered that her mother was a Jew.

She arrived in Britain in 1936 and found research posts in Egyptology, first at the Petrie Museum at University College London, and later at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. It was in Oxford, where she was a senior member of Somerville College, that she met the Welsh scholar J. Gwyn Griffiths.

Their home at Penrith in the Rhondda Valley became the meeting place of the Cadwgan Circle of writers who included Peniarth Davies, later Principal of the Independent Theological College in Swansea, and Rhys-Idwr Williams, the poet and broadcaster. It was largely the initiative of Bosse-Griffiths who brought a European perspective to his discussions of literature, politics, religion and Welsh society.

The war years were a dark time for her: her mother was to die in the Nazi concentration camp at Ravensbrück; her doctor brother eventually escaped to Sweden. After the war, her husband joined the staff of the Classics Department at the University College, Swansea, where he was to remain for the rest of his career; he is now Professor Emeritus of Classics and Egyptology. Their home in the Sketty district of Swansea again became a meeting place for writers and political activists.

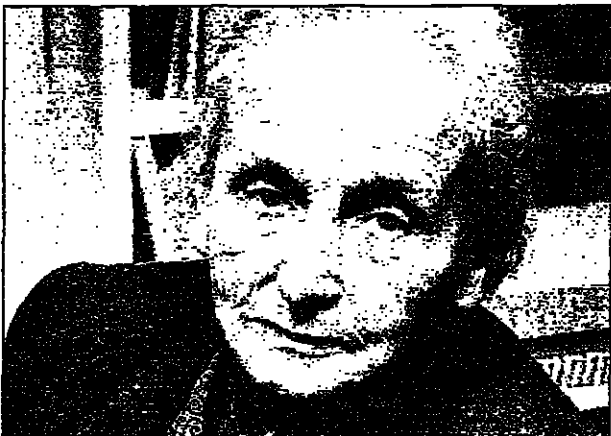
Bosse-Griffiths was as distinguished as her husband (who is also a poet and literary critic in Welsh) in her chosen field. For more than 25 years she was Keeper of Archaeology at Swansea Museum, where she gave special attention to the prehistoric and Roman collections and published a booklet, *Twenty Thousand Years of Local History*. In 1971 she was appointed Hon-

orary Curator of the Wellcome Museum, formerly in the Department of Classics and Ancient History and now in the Egypt Centre at the University of Wales, Swansea, which is to be officially opened later this year.

It was Bosse-Griffiths who arranged for part of the Egyptian Collection made by Sir Henry Wellcome, the pharmaceutical millionaire, to be taken out of storage and rehoused at Swansea in 1971; she also compiled a catalogue of the 5,000 objects held there. The collection's centrepiece is the magnificent painted wooden coffin of Iw-s-hes-mwt, a female musician of the 21st Dynasty, which the university acquired from the Royal Albert Museum, Exeter. She also tracked down, in the British Museum and the Brooklyn Museum respectively, a shabti figure and the musician's *Book of the Dead* from the Amun-temple at Karnak.

Among her specialist publications are studies of the coffin, Egyptian amulets and ancient writing, articles in learned journals such as the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* and her book *Tywsennau o'r Aiffi* ("Ears of Corn from Egypt", 1970).

She began writing in Welsh as early as 1942, starting with *Mudiadu Heddwch yn yr Almaen* ("Peace Movements in Germany", 1943). It was followed in 1951 by *Bwlch yn Llen Haur* ("A Gap in the Iron Curtain"), which addressed the question of a united Germany at the height of the Cold War, and a travel book, *Twm a Rwsia a Berlin* ("A Glimpse at Russia and Berlin", 1962), in which she gave her clear-eyed impressions of the Soviet Union and her native country. Although of left-wing sympathies, she was highly critical of Stalinism and the Communist regime in East Germany.



Bosse-Griffiths: cosmopolitan Photograph: Roger P. Davies

Her main contribution to Welsh letters was her two novels, *Anamwyth Hoen* ("Uneasy Colour", 1941) and *Mae'r Calon wrth y Llŵ* ("The Harp is at the Wheel", 1957), and her two collections of short stories, *Fy Cwiler Efa* ("My Sister Eva", 1944) and *Coriadau* ("Loves", 1955), published in her 85th year. All her fiction is cosmopolitan in its attitudes and subject-matter, and refreshingly libertarian about sexual matters, although she did not consider herself a feminist. One of her last books was a study of witchcraft and folk-medicine, *Byd y Dyn Hysbys* ("The World of the Wizard", 1977).

Although formidably rigorous and perfectly capable of holding a conversation on the most erudite subjects in her adopted language, Kate Bosse-Griffiths was a woman of vivacious personality and genial disposition who shared her husband's commitment to the cause of Plaid Cymru and was a staunch worker for the party at a local level. Both their sons, Robert and Heini Gruffudd, are notable prose-writers in Welsh: one is a leading publisher of Welsh books and the other a tutor in the Department of Continuing Adult Education at the University of Swansea.

Meic Stephens

Käthe Bosse, Egyptologist and writer: born Wittenberg-am-Elbe, Germany 16 July 1910; married 1939 J. Gwyn Griffiths (two sons); died Swansea 4 April 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS
ROBINSON: On 3 April, at Bromov Zickelhaus, to Sian MacLeod and Richard, a son, Angus George MacLeod, a brother for Dora and Carey.

DEATHS
LARKING: John Gordon Very, suddenly on Tuesday 7 April 1998, aged 76 years. Dear friend of Hilary Cator, much-loved brother of Pam and Peter, uncle and great-uncle, and a good friend to many. Private cremation for family and close personal friends. Service of Thanksgiving at a date to be arranged. Family flowers only, donations if desired to the Royal British Legion or the Woodlands Trust for Hospice and Sons. Funeral Directors, 63 High Street, Walslow, Buckinghamshire MK18 3DG.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephoned to 071-293 2812 (24-hour answering machine) and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). Other special announcements (weddings, funerals, forthcoming marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £60 a line. VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, mounted on Queen's Life Guards in Horse Guards, 11, Whitehall, London SW1A 1AA, will be changed by the 1st Grenadier Guards, 11, Whitehall, London SW1A 1AA.

Marriages

Dr J.C.L. Booth and Dr L.A. Fearfield
The marriage took place on Saturday 4 April 1998 at the Church of St Bartholomew, Lowerwater, Carmarthen, of Jonathan, son of Sir Christopher Booth and of Dr Levis Loughbridge, to Louise, daughter of Mr Michael Fearfield and Mrs Angela Fearfield.

Birthdays

Mr Lyndon Brook, actor, 72; Professor J. Desmond Clark, anthropologist and archaeologist, 82; Sir Anthony Cleaver, chairman, AEA Technology, 82; Sir Edward Evans-Lombe, High Court judge, 61; Mr Leinart Pyle, chairman, Co-operative Wholesale Society, 57; Mr Patrick Gardiner, theatre and film director, 63; Mr Adrian Henri, former President, Liverpool Academy of Arts, 66; Mr John Holroyd, Secretary for Appointments to the Prime Minister, 62; Mr Stan Mellor, racehorse trainer and former jockey, 61; Mr David Moorcroft, athlete, 45; Mr Robert Rhodes James, historian and former MP, 65; Mr Omar Sharif, actor, 66; Mr Thomas Spencer, MEP, 50; Mr Christopher Skiddart, managing director, GMTV, 48; Mr Paul Theros, author, 57; Mr Max von Sydow, actor, 69; Sir Rodney Walker, former Chairman, Sports Council, 55.

Anniversaries

Births: John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester, poet and courtier, 1647; Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, founder of homeopathy, 1755;

William Hazlitt, essayist and critic, 1778; Lewis Wallace, author of *Ben Hur*, 1827; William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, 1829; George William Russell (AE), poet, 1867; Deaths: Algernon Charles Swinburne, poet, 1909; Stanley John Weyman, novelist, 1928; Khalil Gibran, writer, 1931; Evelyn Arthur St John Waugh, novelist, 1966; Anais Nin, journalist and novelist, 1909. On this day the Catholic Emancipation Bill was passed by Parliament. 1829; George Eliot's novel *The Mill on the Floss* was published. 1860; Finland was granted a constitution by Russia. 1861; The Archduke Maximilian of Austria became Emperor of Mexico. 1864; Paul von Hindenburg was re-elected President of Germany. 1932; the aircraft carrier HMS *Hermes* was sunk by Japanese dive bombers in the Bay of Bengal. 1942; the US Senate passed the Civil Rights Bill. 1960; the US submarine *Thresher* was lost off Cape Cod, with all the crew of 125. 1963; over 3,000 people were killed after severe earthquakes occurred in Iran. 1972; Golda Meir resigned as Prime Minister of Israel. 1974; the first London performance of the musical *Chicago* was staged. 1979. Today is Good Friday and the Feast Day of St Basil, St Fulbert of Chartres, St Macarius or Macaire of Obent, St Michael de Sants, St Paternus of Alvingh and The Martyrs under the Dunes.

Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 7.34pm.
United Synagogue: 020-343 0989. Federation of Synagogues: 020-323 2263. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 020-580 1643. Reform Synagogue of Great Britain: 0800-349 4771. Spanish and Portuguese Jew Congregation: 071-289 2873. New London Synagogue (Masorti): 071-328 1024.

ARGUMENTS FOR EASTER

The cross must be a reproach to victim culture

Jesus might be seen as the perfect hero for an age obsessed with rape, sexual abuse and violence. But only by those who miss something vital, insists Angela Tilby

GOOD FRIDAY confronts us with the troubling image of a tortured body on a cross, a breached body, exposed beyond all natural defences. No wonder the crucified Jesus is recognised with special force by those with who have experienced bodily invasion: rape, abuse or violence. In recent years we have become sensitised to a range of hidden sufferings which compel us to see the cross afresh, as through the eyes of the victims of these assaults on the self.

The liturgy of Good Friday plays on the emotions, reminding us of breaches both suffered and inflicted. It is right that abused and abusers see some mirroring of their plight in the tortured Jesus. Yet there is also a problem with this so temporary identification. The study of abuse shows that many victims become abusers themselves. Others are

left with a habit of suffering which they use to exercise control over others. Of course, there is no moral parity between abuser and victim, but part of the horror of abuse is the way the victim experiences deification, as though the perpetrator's guilt has become their own.

If the figure on the cross is perceived primarily as a victim, the contemplation of the cross becomes no more than a morbid exercise: a stirring up of shame and indignation without resolution. Nothing is restored or re-established: there is neither atonement for the sins of the body, nor cleansing for the brutalised soul.

Those whose natural boundaries have been breached sometimes have great difficulty in establishing safe boundaries in subsequent relationships. There will always be an excess of need, a lack which no amount of security or affection can make up.

Christian devotion also can let the sufferings of Jesus manipulate our hearts to an excess of guilt. In the Re-proaches of the Good Friday liturgy God speaks as our victim:

O my people, what have I done unto thee, or wherein have I wearied thee? . . . Because I brought thee forth from the land of Egypt thou preparedst a cross for thy saviour.

The working up of guilt on Good Fri-

day is related to the Christian tendency to make cruel demands on human bodies and souls. If there are no boundaries in the sufferings of the cross, how can there be any limits to our response? Does the passion displayed there not "demand my soul, my life, my all"? And if that is so, if this body has been breached, for me, how can I withhold my body—or yours—from neglect or torture in the service of the crucified?

The Good Friday liturgy intersperses the Reproaches with the ancient acclamation: "Holy God, Holy and strong, Holy and immortal, have mercy on us."

In the fifth century the habit grew up among Christians of the East of adding the words "crucified for us" before the final phrase. This caused controversy as many believed it was crucially important to maintain a strict distinction between the human and the divine natures in the one Christ. For them, the claim that the holy and immortal one was crucified for us was a paradox too far.

If there is hope in the breached body of Jesus it must be in the capacity of that body to open the horizons of divinity. The breached body can only heal if it is the body of the Word of God which holds all things in existence, es-

tablishing the boundaries of created being.

The saving power of the cross is that the body of Jesus comes between the abuser and the victim, absorbing both the uncontrolled invasiveness of the one while holding together the fractured self of the other so that there is a chance of restoration. Here is both judgement and mercy: a woundedness which has no limits joined to a powerfulness that has no end.

The cross need not be seen as a glorification of victimhood. Its consequences are a judgement on the abuser, an exorcism of repeated pain, and a re-establishment of proper human boundaries of respect.

The intimacy of relationship between our driven, vulnerable bodies and that of the crucified Lord implied by some of the old devotions is almost unbearable. And yet I know of no words which speak to the condition of the abuser and the victim within myself with such clarity as the rarely used words from the Holy Communion Service in the Book of Common Prayer:

Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood and that we may ever more dwell in him and be in us.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Israel's search for security

WHATEVER the ultimate fate of the Northern Ireland peace process may be, Stormont Castle is not, of course, the only place in the world where a "peace process" has been going on for decades. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel we see the hardest lesson of all – that it can be the years after a "settlement" that are the most dangerous. As with Ireland, history provides a key to understanding the ready diet of grievances, suspicions and a national obsession with security. It also shows us how the imperatives of security can change.

It is a little hard to recall that, a few months after the proclamation of the State of Israel in 1948, Winston Churchill told the House of Commons that this event was "one of the most hopeful and encouraging adventures of the 20th century". Indeed he went on to warn the basty historians of tomorrow: "The coming into being of a Jewish State in Palestine is an event in world history to be viewed in the perspective not of a generation or a century, but in the perspective of a thousand, two thousand or even three thousand years."

Journalists are notoriously short-termist but it is possible even with such a short vantage point as a mere half-century to offer a tentative judgement on the state of the State of Israel. In brief, it is uncertain as to how much hope and encouragement for peace could be derived from the present leadership of Israel.

In fact, the first 50 years of Israel's history might be best described as a "war process". Israel was a nation born out of conflict and hatreds stretching back in a truly Churchillian timescale. It certainly gained a huge momentum because of the hostility the Jewish diaspora encountered almost wherever it went. This varied from time to time and from society to society, from mild snobbishness to the kind of violent state-sponsored pogroms that culminated in the Holocaust. But whilst these events resulted in waves of frightened people emigrating to Palestine (and elsewhere) it needed the guarantee of American support and the successful war of self-determination to found the nation.

Even then Israel was not secure, or at least did not feel secure, and much of her story has been a search for security. It has been a struggle between hawks and doves.

When Israel found herself in major armed conflicts with all of her neighbours in each of her five decades of existence one could understand the hawkish outlook. The wars have contributed to the Israeli perception that she is "vulnerable", "threatened" by hostile neighbours. She may, at various times, have been right. Certainly no-one could mistake the anti-Israeli rhetoric of some of her enemies who wanted the state driven into the sea. Israel's story has been one where leaders like David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir have trusted no-one and placed their faith in force. This tradition has been shamelessly exploited by the present Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. As we come to the 50th anniversary, Israel should in fact recognise the scale of her own achievements and that the time for hawkishness has passed.

The state is no longer seriously threatened by external enemies. Her alliance with the United States has been tested time and time again. She has concluded peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. She has survived each of her armed conflicts and emerged strengthened. There are new threats to the stability of Israel, but more and more of these are "home grown", like the extremist Israeli gunman who murdered Yitzhak Rabin. Or they emerge from Israeli policy, like the West Bank settlements. The responses of the past are no longer appropriate and do not, in fact, serve Israel's best security interests. Let alone justice or morality. Israel need not fear ending the oppression of the Palestinian people and the creation of a fully independent Palestinian state.

The Israeli anthem for the 50th anniversary runs: "Together in pride / Together in hope". As in Northern Ireland, we hope that the Israelis will soon work to add "Together in peace".

Courts martial on trial

WHO could resist the story of bonking under cover of the noise of jump-jacks landing and taking off? We may not think we ought to be interested, and we must all be sure that it does not matter, but the vast majority of newspaper readers have followed the case of the "officer and the Wren" with rather more attention to detail than, say, the Government's deliberations on the question of trade union recognition.

Yesterday, Lieutenant-Colonel Keith Pople was acquitted by a court martial of prejudicing military discipline and scandalous conduct. What he and Lieutenant-Commander Karen Pearce got up to hardly qualifies as a scandal these days, but it was gripping stuff on the border between soft porn and gossip. But military discipline had not been compromised, and in that sense the court martial produced the right verdict.

If two grown-ups want to do – as he described them – "foolish things in private", then that should not be a matter for any kind of court, even if they are married. The forces' ban on adultery is out of date and counter-productive.

The only issue which could concern discipline is one which is not limited to the forces. Sexual relations between superiors and subordinates can be unwise, and they can be exploitative. But Lt-Cdr Pearce is no cowering ratling; she is one of the most senior women in the Navy. The court martial panel concluded that she and Lt-Col Pople had effectively worked as equals, and that he did not have the chance to influence her career.

More generally, however, and to the extent that the law does govern sexual relations, in the fields of sex equality, harassment and rape, then surely all cases should be heard in the civil courts, and not in historical relics retained in the services and the church.

Then this case would not have been brought, as it should not have been. We would lose a "good read", but avoid a lot of collateral damage in the process.



Independent Scotland?

I WAS fascinated by Donald MacIntyre's article on the problems raised by Scottish devolution (Comment, 7 April).

How important is the Union? Politically, 18 years of Conservative majorities in England and Labour majorities in Scotland indicate that so long as New Labour keep Middle England sweet, Scotland is irrelevant. Economically, Scotland's mix of export-dependent manufacturing and agricultural industries means a strong pound is hitting harder. An independent economic policy based on stronger European links therefore becomes more attractive to business.

Culturally, the devolution gamble is that a Scottish Parliament will not lead to a greater sense of shared identity amongst "people who live in Scotland" (as Alex Salmond very carefully put it recently), but will allow a greater participation by Scotland in British government.

Frankly, I doubt if devolution will work. The impulse towards Scottish independence is not based on ethnic nationalism, but on the awareness that the United Kingdom does not meet the standards required of a modern democracy. A federal UK might, but such a possibility is not being offered.

Sixty-two per cent of people living in Scotland now believe that Scotland will become independent within the next 15 years. Rather than fight to hold on to the status quo, would it not be more sensible for people living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to treat Scottish independence as an opportunity to extend their own democratic freedoms through some form of federal government?

ALISTAIR LIVINGSTON
Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire

Sentencing paedophiles

I ASSUMED that all civilised people subscribed to the view that sentences should be proportionate to the offence of which the accused was convicted, not some notional propensity to commit crime in the future.

No doubt the public need pro-

tecting from paedophile offenders but this is already catered for in the Criminal Justice Act 1991 s2 (2) (b). What the Home Secretary seems to be proposing (report, 7 April) is little short of internment without trial. If a judge sets a sentence which he believes reflects the seriousness of the crime and the need to protect the public, on what grounds can that be extended?

No-one doubts that these offences are among the most heinous; few, if any, would argue with the idea of enforced continuing treatment and support for the offenders; even fewer would argue that current sentences could not be more severe.

However, let us not abandon the all-important principles on which sentencing is based. Keeping someone in prison after they have served their proper sentence is simply wrong and we do ourselves no favours if we ignore that for this year's most-hated crime.

TETTEH TURKSON
London SE5

British Jews not perfect

GERALD KAUFMAN is absolutely right ("Kaufman attacks 'pompos' Jewry", 8 April). The Board of Deputies of British Jews is, to add to his arsenal of adjectives, an amorphous and largely pointless body, quite unrepresentative of British Jewry as a whole, most of whom have never heard of it.

How regrettable, then, that the one way in which they do represent us is in the perpetuation of Anglo-Jewry's tired and clichéd "poor me" mentality, our seeming inability to accept criticism of anything Jewish or Israel-related, and worse, our constantly confusing anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism and screaming anti-Semitism every time Mr Netanyahu and

his ruinous government are called to account.

The Jewish community in this country is both divided and dwindling – our numbers are so much smaller than our strong presence would make it seem – and the Board of Deputies, with their incessant whingeing and posturing, do nothing to improve the situation. As Passover approaches, and with it tales of great Jewish heroics of the past, it really is high time we Jews removed the communal chip from our hypersensitive shoulder and accepted that, contrary to every Jewish mother's protestation, we're not perfect.

PETER MOSS
Edgware, Middlesex

A fair share for London

YOUR article "London overshadows regions in fight for funds" (7 April) discussed government expenditure going to London. It seems rather disingenuous not to mention the income that London in turn gives to the Treasury. The net difference is substantial.

Government figures show £4,228 expenditure per head to London. Until the Government publishes figures showing exactly where money is spent, we must rely on other estimates, which show that London actually subsidises the rest of the UK to the tune of £6bn.

However, as your article states, investment figures on London can be justified on the basis of social deprivation alone – 14 of the 30 poorest local authority districts in England are in London. I think it would be hard for anyone to call us greedy for wanting London's fair share.

STEPHEN O'BRIEN
Chief Executive
London First
London SW1

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Moving the King's Library

PETER HOARE (letter, 1 April) is right that the King's Library is as magnificently housed in its new setting in St Pancras as it was in the British Museum. There are, however, points in Brian Lang's letter (23 March) which call for comment.

The suggestion that the books would have disintegrated "in time" if they had remained where they were is unconvincing for those of us who have handled books and manuscripts up to 500 years old which still appear to be in pristine condition despite the absence of air conditioning, either because they have been very little used or because of the excellence of the materials used in making them, or more likely, both. Whatever the storage conditions, the paper most likely to disintegrate is the cheaper kind manufactured from wood pulp in the middle of the 20th century. None of the King's Library books falls into that category.

G CHOWDHARY-BEST
London SW3

Dangerous driving

MOTORCYCLES can be driven badly and dangerously, as Jane McNamara says (letter, 8 April) – so can any vehicle. The difference is that when a motorcyclist has an accident, a relatively small machine is out of control; consequently, most motorcycle accidents only injure the rider and pillion. When a car crashes, a ton of metal can have much more serious consequences.

Ms McNamara's other point was that motorcycles were overtaking on the wrong side of the road. That's where you are whilst overtaking. This is not illegal.

NEAL CHAMPION
Sturton, Gloucestershire

Long-remembered hoax

WILLIAM BOYD and David Bowie's literary hoax (report, 7 April) was in fact a failure. They were unable to convince more than a roomful of trusting guests for longer than six days that their imaginary artist did exist.

Possibly William Boyd wished to write himself into the history books as the Australian poet Jim McAuley and Harold Stewart did in 1944 with *Err Malley* and the *Angry Penguins*. If so, maybe he should be grateful that his little ruse was not as successful as theirs, and take heed from McAuley's words to a friend before he died: "I sometimes fear this will be what I am remembered for."

SEAN RABIN
London NW10

THE STORY of Nat Tate is worthy to join those of Ossian and Chatterton/Rowley. However, there is one drawback, in that such hoaxes can and do inhibit true revelatory and scholarly work whose purpose is to discover and restore greatness to those figures from the past who, for one reason or another, have been neglected.

Such a figure is Joseph Crabtree (1754-1854), poet and polymath, in honour of whom the Crabtree Foundation was formed in 1954 at University College London. Articles have been published which have hinted at an element of hoax. Would that more journalists and scholars would admit, as you suggest, "we've never heard of him". At least we could tell them.

BRYAN BENNETT
The Crabtree Foundation
London W4

Parisian meridian

THE line of trees to be planted from Dunkirk to the Pyrenees for the millennium (report, 8 April) will mark not the Greenwich meridian but, the Parisian one, which the French have long tried in vain to sell to the rest of the world. One hopes that this gesture of futile nationalism is symbolic of the second and not the third millennium.

P J STEWART
St Anne's College, Oxford

A mysterious Easter weekend assignation with the Crusaders of Calais



MILES KINGDON

"WHAT are you doing for Easter, then?"

It was the man next to me in the pub who had asked me this innocuous but challenging question. It took me unawares. This was partly because I had no idea what I was doing for Easter, and partly because I had no idea what I should be doing for Easter. My religious convictions keep me out of churches at Easter time, and my lack of forward planning prevents me from spending the Easter weekend milling around airports.

"Well," I said, "I thought I'd just drive aimlessly up and down the motorway, looking for Easter Fayres, or, failing that, Alton Towers, or, failing that, a car boot sale, or, failing that, a grim but vital end-of-season bottom-of-the-division relegation battle, or, failing that..."

"Know what I'm going to do for Easter?" said the man.

I should have known. He wanted me to ask him what HE was going to do for Easter.

"So, what are YOU going to do for Easter?" I asked him.

"I'm going on a crusade."

"Oh, that's interesting. A crusade against what?"

"Just a crusade. One of the crusades, you know. You've heard of the crusades, and Richard the Lionheart, and all that?"

"Oh, you're going on a Crusade?"

I mentally changed the small c to a capital C.

"That's right. Reclaim the Holy Land. Bring it back from the infidel."

"I thought we'd done that already?"

"Nothing of the sort. At the moment the Holy Land is in the hands of two types of infidel, the Israeli and the Palestinian, and we aim to sweep both of them out and reinstate old-fashioned Christianity."

"You'll need a bit longer than the Easter weekend for that, won't you?"

"I've done a lot of this sort of thing before," he said ruminatively, ignoring my question. "First it was with the Sealed Knot, recreating old battles. Then it was with the Sealed Flask..."

"Sealed Flask?" I said.

"The medical arm of the Sealed Knot."

We used to mount spectacular pageants to recreate long-forgotten diseases. Scurvy, bubonic plague, Black Death and so on. Great fun. I'd show you my warts if I had the time. But now I'm with the Sealed Orders."

"Sealed Orders?"

"It's a new organisation which recreates mystery assignations. Anything a bit clandestine. Man In The Iron Mask. Princes In The Tower. Monty's Double – that sort of thing."

"And now you're going on a Crusade?"

"Sssh!"

The man looked round.

"We're trying to keep it as secret as possible. We don't want the infidel to know we're coming. But if you should happen to read next week that the Arabs and Jews have both been evicted from Jerusalem, you can remember this conversation."

"Won't there be immense practical difficulties?" I said.

"Well, nothing as bad as what the Cru-

saders themselves faced. Most of them self-inflicted, of course. Charging into battle with a red cross on a white front is about as provocative as you can get – and provides the best possible target! No, we're going to be more subtle than that..."

"How many of you will there be?"

"Six... maybe a few more..."

"But surely..."

"We only took four of us when we recreated Hannibal crossing the Alps. It was quite enough. Nobody spotted us."

"Did you take elephants?"

"No. We wanted to but we thought we'd try and see if Hannibal could have done it WITHOUT elephants."

"And how far did you get?"

The man suddenly looked a little apologetic.

"Well, to be honest the weather turned nasty early on, so we called the whole thing off at... at Calais."

"CALAIS?"

"Yes. So we just loaded the van with as

much cheap booze as we could and came back."

"Enlightenment began to dawn."

"And would you say there's a very good chance that your Easter Crusade reconstruction will also be curtailed at Calais?"

"More than likely."

"And that you will come back laden with booze again?"

"Almost certainly."

"Not really in the Crusade spirit, is it?"

The man looked indignant.

"That's where you're wrong! Don't forget that half the Crusades never even got to the Holy Land! And that half the people involved were only after the pillaging and plundering and profiteering! To turn round at Calais and come back after buying booze is directly in the spirit of the Crusades!"

He went on to tell me that this summer the Sealed Orders movement is thinking seriously of recreating some of the Scarlet Pimpernel's exploits. But I can't help thinking that most of them will also take place in Calais.

An Irish
last power



modes

هكذا من الأرحام

An Irish lesson – look to the last power-sharing agreement



DAVID
MCKITTERICK
THE THREAT FROM
ULTRA-LOYALISM

IF HISTORY is any guide in Northern Ireland – and it all too frequently is – the greatest threat to a new agreement will come not from republicanism but from the further shores of loyalism. While the governments and most parties will be pushing hard for public backing for a new deal, a motley array of loyalist paramilitaries and politicians is intent on using violence, political means and street activity to bring it down.

They did it before. Unionists and nationalists once before united in an attempt to make a fresh start in Northern Ireland, in the Sunningdale agreement of 1973-74, in a deal eerily similar in many respects to that which is now on the table. It was hailed as a new dawn; but in the face of concerted Protestant wrath and a loyalist general strike, it lasted less than five months.

The *Point of No Return*, Robert Fisk's book on that extraordinary episode, was aptly sub-titled: "the strike which broke the British in Ulster". It was highly accurate in that it was over a decade before a British government plucked up the courage to take a fresh initiative in the face of the discouragement felt after the strike. There have been many changes since then, yet a surprising amount of the political grammar remains intact.

What the British and Irish governments are now engaged in has been called "Sunningdale Mark 2", and even "Sunningdale for slow learners". Success in the enterprise will depend on the hope that many people have learned many lessons since that first time around.

Sunningdale was a political initiative on an epic scale. For 30 years, Northern Ireland had been controlled by the Unionist party, which enjoyed an unbroken run of one-party rule at Stormont. Then Edward Heath swept it away in 1972, concluding after Bloody Sunday that it was unworkable. Heath and the first Northern Ireland Secretary, William Whitelaw, then spent most of 1972 and most of 1973 trying to put together a scheme that might be characterised as Stormont with Catholics. It came in two installments.

The first, in late 1973, was the announcement that Unionist leader Brian Faulkner and the SDLP had agreed to form a coalition to run a new assembly. The executive was composed of six Unionists, four SDLP ministers, and one from the middle-of-the-road Alliance party. That was the powersharing executive; next came what was known as "the Irish dimension". This was hammered out over several days and nights at a conference centre at Sunningdale, in Berkshire, with Heath pushing for agreement in late-night sessions much like Tony Blair's efforts in Belfast this week.

The result, known as the Sunningdale agreement, provided for a new Belfast-Dublin Council of Ireland with functions similar to that of the cross-border body now on the table. When Faulkner wrote in his memoirs that "the problem seemed to be the executive and harmonising functions of the Council of Ministers", he could have been describing the issue that proved so contentious this week.

The new executive came into office in January 1974, with Faulkner as chief executive and John Hume as minister for commerce. In those days, Sinn Féin did not exist as a political force; but the IRA perfunctorily dismissed the whole enterprise as an attempt to "prop up the British presence". The republicans have come a long way since those days.

But before the IRA could launch an organised assault on the deal, loyalists beat them to the punch. First, the Rev Ian Paisley and his political allies disrupted the assembly, one official recalling: "Faulkner was spat upon, jostled, reviled and shouted down. It was sad to see him spat upon by lesser men, political pygmies and procedural bullies and wild men of the woods and the bogs."

Next, the February 1974 British general election produced a disastrous result, anti-powersharing Unionists winning 11 of Northern Ireland's 12 Westminster seats. Then came the loyalist strike, which was run by a committee including Unionist politicians, loyalist paramilitaries and Protestant trade unionists.

An uncertain response from the Labour government of the day gave the strikers almost complete control over electricity generation, allowing them to run down power supplies and cause frequent power cuts. A state of emergency was declared. Workers were turned back by men carrying clubs and blocking roads with hijacked vehicles: relatively little overt force was used on the streets, the paramilitary leaders finding that what one of them drily called "intimidation without violence" was sufficient deterrent to send the workers back home.

But within days Protestant opinion swung behind the strike, and after a few weeks it became apparent that the powersharing executive, and indeed the government itself, had lost almost all authority. The Sunningdale agreement collapsed; with it went

Success will depend on people having learned from Sunningdale

most of the hope for an agreed settlement; and many politically arid years followed.

That was then: this is now, and many things have changed. Protestant industrial muscle is not what it was, some of those who supported the strike – like David Trimble – now believe more in the political way than they used to, and the leaders of the major loyalist paramilitary groups say they want to talk rather than fight.

Republicans are signalling that they want to move away from violence and into politics: not everyone believes them, but the idea of a peace process has permeated the atmosphere, implanting the notion in some unlikely quarters that there may be a better way. But some things have not changed.

Mr Paisley, then as now, is gearing up for a major campaign in the politics of denunciation and the rhetoric of sell-out. While it is tempting for outsiders to dismiss him as a melodramatic anachronism, the fact is that he retains a potent appeal, two years ago taking 36 per cent of the Unionist vote. His tactic will be to create splits in the ranks of other Unionist and loyalist groups. There are already unhappy voices in Mr Trimble's own party, four of his 10 MPs being dead set against any deal; Mr Paisley will be intent on fanning such embers of dissent. On the paramilitary front the Loyalist Volunteer Force, a fierce new outfit, will use the gun against a new agreement. They and the other deal opponents will hope to exploit the July Drumcree marching controversy to rally support.

The realignment of forces that has taken place since 1974 means there is less chance of the loyalist ultras succeeding in bringing down a deal. The fact remains, however, that they intend to try, and in doing so will provide a new deal with its sternest test.

The private pleasure we take from observing public pain



SUZANNE
MOORE
ON SEX IN THE
NEWS, AGAIN

IT'S NEVER easy to write when you are in handcuffs but I'll just have to do the best I can. You see, much to my shame, I have been arrested for committing a lewd act in a public place. I just couldn't help myself. I saw the headlines and was overcome with the desire to read every single sentence I could about a certain Mr Michael and his unfortunate affair in a public lavatory somewhere in Beverly Hills. I needed to know what Elton John thought, what Boy George thought, what female readers of the *Sun* thought, what the childhood friend of George Michael who had a pretend wedding with him when she was five thought, what the shrinks thought, what the police thought, what gay groups thought... and I admit I just got carried away.

I became visibly aroused even though there were other people present. Nine pages in the *Sun*, five in the *Mirror* never mind all the rest. They were asking for it. It's not really my fault is it? In my defence all I can say is that this is a mutually consenting relationship. I want salacious details and boy does everyone else get off on giving it to me. Staring long and hard at the vital picture of the actual cubicle in which the lewd act occurred. I assumed that I could just be left alone with these filthy secrets. Now, I suppose I can't. I have to be outed as a parasite, a voyeur of this whole sordid tale of the coupling of fame and sex in the twentieth century.

George Michael. Gay? Scoop of the century to some perhaps, though I'd say he's dropped more than a few hints in the past myself. Designer stubble anyone? Certainly it fills in the time and space while the media waits for the outcome of that unsexy old Irish peace process. Not only gay but prepared to seek illicit thrills in public toilets. Wonderful. Not just gay but actively contagious. Brilliant.

Depending on what side your bread is buttered, this all proves something. Either George is really deeply gay and has done this subconsciously to be outed and once forced out he can live happily ever after in the community of gay loveliness. Or George is deeply confused and did this disgusting thing in a lavatory because he cannot come to terms with being gay as he is a tor-



Newspaper entrapment – the coupling of fame and sex in the twentieth century

Photograph: Rui Xavier

tured artist who worries about his record sales. Or try this for size. Maybe George is gay for about five minutes at a time. Maybe his sexuality is as ambiguous as he has always claimed. Maybe sex in a toilet with a stranger is really much better than sex in the missionary position with a woman. And so what if it is?

Sex is a messy business but gay sex is sometimes as straight as you can get. After the confusion you come out of the closet which is very, very good or stay in it which is very, very bad: not only for yourself but for all

celebrities like Anthea Turner are up for sale too. Indeed many would say she and Della have sold themselves profitably to the highest bidder.

The private lives of the unfamous are also up for grabs. As Kilroy tries to sex up his shows, having watched a few episodes of Jerry Springer, then it's confession a go-go. Everything is permitted. In public. In front of a camera. What he said to you one night over the phone. What you did with him in your sister's house. What happened when his wife walked in. What happened when you found that he

do it? Show me pictures of the toilet. Does Kevin Costner Gaynor want pictures of the secret wedding. Every story is a shock and tell session and every star who wants to be a star as much as George Michael wanted it knows the deal.

He controlled his image fanatically, even acknowledging that his sexual ambiguity made him seem more fascinating, more sexy. Mysterious. Enigmatic. Elusive. There are good words if you want, as he once wanted, to be as famous as Michael Jackson. They upped asking price, make your own

body of which parts of your body you rub against which parts of another body.

Have we become so sexually jaded that we can only have this kind of virtual sex through other people? Are you genuinely shocked when we find that yes, in fact, our sex symbols have sex. Does that ruin our fantasies? We want to be them and possess them and when we can't we take great comfort instead in stories about how miserable and lonely our symbols of sex might be.

Free George Michael. We are guilty. Not him. Send the man who has seen close friends die of Aids, who has campaigned for Aids charities on an Aids awareness course, if that makes it all morally justifiable. Or free yourselves. It's already too late for me. For George's case looks like a clear case of police entrapment. The rest of us, all the suckers who lap up every vicious scrap about the rise and fall of a mega-star, are also victims of entrapment. And you know the really sick thing? We pay for it. We yearn for it. We even enjoy our own degradation. Why keep it in the closet any longer? Why not just come out and say that our private pleasure comes from public pain, that we are all part of the lewdest act in the world?

Have we become so sexually jaded that we can only have virtual sex through other people? Are we genuinely shocked when we find that yes, in fact, our sex symbols have sex?

other gay people. Well, that's the script anyway and it works for some but maybe not everyone. I thought actually that George had come out of the closet anyway when he talked about his relationship with Anselmo Feleppa, his Brazilian "soulmate", but perhaps he snuck back in when I wasn't paying attention.

Clearly it is a matter of national urgency that he now tells us exactly what he is. Just as we need to know whether the President's penis is straight or bendy, that jumbo jet engines hide the noise of "sex sessions" among adulterous army officers, that Grant has gone back to Della, dumping Michael, that Hewitt is a cad and should be hung for treason. The private lives of the rich and famous are public property.

The private lives of B-list

was a she. What your mother said to his mother. Let it all hang out baby. Express yourself. Repression is wrong. Honesty is right, no matter who gets hurt, who ends up looking stupid. No one remembers the best line from *Pulp Fiction*: "That's a little bit more information than I need right now."

There is really only one other thing to be said here, and it should have been said to George Michael just like it has to be said to the media. Put it away darling. We really don't want to see it. Run along. In order to say this however one has to mean it and none of us mean it in our hearts because we feel somehow that we have the right to see everything. In an increasingly visual culture seeing is believing. Is Diana dead? Show me pictures of the body. Did George Michael

little out of reach. A little bit exciting. If your image is one of deliberate ambiguity, if you, as John Lennon sang, have to "hide your love away", the reality has to be more dull. There are only three boxes you can tick here: gay, straight, bisexual. I'm afraid it's that limited when it comes down to the ba-

A modest proposal to censor the Internet



CHARLES
ARTHUR
CLEAN SCREENS
FOR CHILDREN

PRICKING a bubble is an irresistible urge. About 18 months ago, I met the chief executive of a software company offering a new product to "filter out Internet porn". His suit, like his face, was shiny and expensive, and he was eager to boast of the fact that his product meant that children would not be able to access "pornographic" discussion groups (usually called, in the Net lingo, newsgroups).

He had a computer running the product and it was true that if you tried to access newsgroups such as *alt.sex.pictures*, a big sign flashed up saying *BLOCKED*. However, while I'm not exactly a dedicated hacker, it took me less than a minute to find a Web site that stored all those newsgroups, and their pictures. His face was a picture too: because it wouldn't be possible to just add that site to the *BLOCKED* list. It's not, of itself, a source of pornography; it simply archives newsgroups – all 28,000 or so of them, from discussions about cats, and fishing, onwards and onwards to the weird realms of *alt.sex.extraterrestrial* and *alt.sex.bondage*, particle physics.

Which is why yesterday's announcement from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers that they want protection for children, and their own members, from pornography which is just "two clicks away" on the Internet, made me think that some lessons aren't easily learnt.

Wary that parents will blame the teachers for what children

see on screen, the ATL has decided it's up to teachers and schools to guarantee "safe" systems are in place to protect their pupils. So the union has launched its own Internet access package for members, including a so-called "cyber patrol" facility to block off access to pornographic or racially offensive sites.

The trouble with this "filtering" approach to the Internet is that you can't both reveal in the usefulness of the Internet, yet try to erect fences on it. There are 320 million Web pages, expanding all the time, and even the best of the many "search engines" (which aim to be an ever-updated index of all of those) only manages to cover one-third of them.

As it's impossible to audit 320 million Web pages, any company claiming that its package blocks every site containing pornography is obviously wrong. Some packages try to filter key words from going out or coming in – which can lead to odd effects when children are doing research about breast cancer or Scunthorpe.

The other solution is to require authors to attach labels to each Web page, indicating what sort of content it has – is it adult, is it about drugs or sex, and so on. From that, you could surely define a subset of the Internet which is "safe for children".

Sorry, but no. For one thing, it would mean someone having to go back and attach labels to all those 320 million (more, by now) pages. Sometimes the original author is long gone, but the page remains, still holding useful information (perhaps about how clouds form, or why the rock at the top of Everest is marine limestone). Insist on labels, and those useful pages disappear from your children's screens. And what about Websites that generate news cuts across simple labels? Should eight-year-olds be allowed to look at news sites reporting that George Michael was arrested performing a "lewd act"? If not, why are they allowed to listen to the radio, or buy newspapers? If news sites are exempted, then everyone will at once define their

Web pages as "news" and show the law to be an ass. Foiled again.

The answer to this problem is both simpler, and more obvious than the ATL and those who would push filtering software on schools have realised. If you don't want children at school to have unrammed access to the Internet, don't. Create your own instead.

The Government's pledge is that by 2002 every school will be connected, able "to download material from educational databases around the world". What they and the teachers want to do is to tap the useful information out there. The approach to take, therefore, is the same as building a school library. You don't include every book that's ever been published. You pick and choose, focussing on the most useful.

As a child I used to spend lunch hours poring over a series of *Time-Life* books in our school library, including one about mathematics, which included wonders such as the one-sided Mobius band and the single-surfaced Klein bottle.

Why did I read those? Well, the pictures were good, and besides, there wasn't a pornography section.

The Government should put their money into building a network accessible only by schools; it should contain the best material from the Net pertaining to the curricula – and more besides. It could run on its own computers – which would make it faster than the Internet. The content would be known, and it could be expanded as required.

Why duplicate what's already out there? For the same reason as you have textbooks – you're trying to focus unwilling minds on the task in hand. Setting it up will be expensive and time-consuming, but worthwhile things usually are.

Attaching a telephone line to a computer running some filtering software is quicker, and cheaper. It's also ineffective – and creates a wonderful new challenge for the children: hacking their way round the filters. And if I could do it, you can bet that a determined child will.

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FOR A BROCHURE

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Relief as rates stay put

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

INTEREST rates will not be raised this month, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee announced yesterday, in a decision which put it under the most intense scrutiny it has experienced since its creation last May.

The announcement brought relief to home-buyers but got a grudging welcome from industry. Businesses and unions, which had lobbied vigorously against a rate rise, called for the Bank to go further and declare it would not increase the cost of borrowing in future either.

Ian Peters, deputy director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "The Governor of the Bank of England must now send a clear signal that interest rates have reached their peak."

Kate Barker, chief economist at the Confederation of British Industry, said: "It would have been better news still if the Bank of England had indicated that there was now a good chance that the next interest rate move would be downward."

The MPC's meeting was bound to be controversial because of the strength of the pound, which many people blame on the level of interest rates. Sterling's climb during the past two years has slowed down export growth, putting manufacturers under increasing pressure.

Ken Jackson, general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, called for the House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee to investigate the strong pound.

"One third of manufacturing was wiped out during the recession of the 1980s. The same

will happen again if rates rise further," he predicted.

The reaction in the financial markets to the MPC's announcement was muted. The pound was almost unchanged against the German mark while the sterling index edged 0.1 lower to 107.3. Shares continued their upward trend, the FTSE 100 index climbing 50 points to 6,105.5.

City experts disagreed about whether borrowing costs should rise to cool the pace of overall growth and keep inflation on target, but most were sceptical about whether a statement of intent from the Bank would make any difference to the pound.

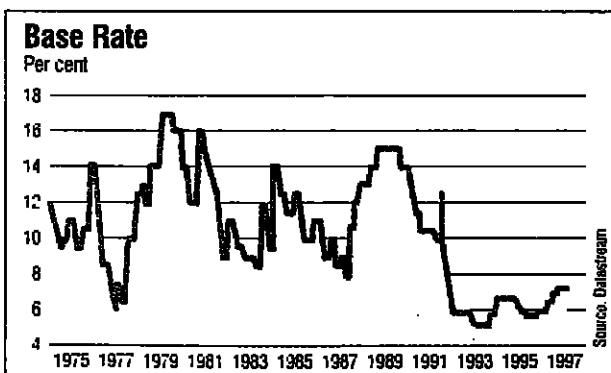
Roger Bootle, chief economist at HSBC Markets, welcomed the decision yesterday. But he said: "I'm not at all convinced that it's that easy to manipulate expectations in the financial markets."

Ciarán Barr of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, one of the City hawks who reckons the Bank might now have to tighten policy next month, said: "People looking for a rate cut are in for a long wait. We're miles away from that."

The eight-person MPC has been split since January, and the latest published minutes revealed the Governor had to use his casting vote in favour of no change in February. The split has been presumed to be four-four since then, but minutes of yesterday's meeting will not be released until mid-May.

The inflation forecast in the Bank's quarterly Inflation Report next month is thought to be critical to future prospects for rates. February's report said another increase in borrowing costs was more likely than not.

Outlook, page 21
Diane Coyle, page 24



In the pits: All derivative traders in London have been offered free trials on the German exchange's electronic system

Outcry over Germans' offer to Liffe members

By Lea Pasterson

THE GERMAN derivatives exchange has tried to lure away the entire membership of Liffe. London's troubled financial futures and options exchange.

The Deutsche Terminbörse (DTB) has written to all of Liffe's members and offered them a free six-month trial of its electronic trading system. This includes a rent-free computer terminal and the necessary software. A spokesperson for DTB yesterday declined to say how many Liffe members had taken up the offer.

The DTB's move is the latest in series of audacious attempts to raise its profile in the UK and steal market share from Liffe. Its arch-rival, in recent weeks, the DTB has taken out full page adverts in a number of UK national newspapers offering to install its own electronic system at Liffe for free. Liffe, which recently decided to introduce electronic trading alongside its traditional open outcry system, turned down the offer.

"The DTB's system does not have the superior functionality we require," replied Jack Wigglesworth, Liffe's chairman.

The debate over electronic trading is just one dilemma facing Liffe, which is widely perceived as being "caught on the hop" by the aggressive assault from its German rival. Liffe has been rapidly losing share to the DTB, and its management is coming under

increasing pressure from the membership.

A DTB spokesperson said the German exchange's share of trading in the prestigious German Bund future was almost 70 per cent last month. "It is now approaching 80 per cent," he added. In the middle of last year, it was Liffe that had a 70 per cent share of trade in the Bund - DTB's share was just 30 per cent.

The DTB attributes its recent success to its electronic system as well as its aggressive pricing tactics. It currently costs 50 pence (16¢) to trade a Bund future on the DTB - the comparable figure at Liffe is more than 50 per cent higher.

One prominent member of Liffe said: "We've lost the innovative edge that gave Liffe so much strength in the past." The Liffe member put the blame for the downturn in the exchange's fortunes squarely at the feet of the management. He said: "Most of Liffe's members have the flexibility and the ability to do well, but there is poor leadership. You need commercially minded people to run the exchange, people who are familiar with the background of the business."

Jack Wigglesworth's term as Liffe chairman comes to an end next month, when he is expected to stand down. Daniel Hodson, Liffe's chief executive, has also faced calls from some members to resign, although he has said he has "no intention" of doing so.

In an extraordinary meeting next week, members will vote on whether the exchange

should have a full-time chairman. The move to full-time chairmanship is just one of the proposals suggested by management in an attempt to revive the Liffe's fortunes.

The membership will also vote next week on whether to cut the size of Liffe's board to 18 members. Liffe's board has been called "unwieldy", and insiders have questioned the commitment of some board members.

Currently, there are 24 members of the board members at Liffe, one fewer than the normal 25 following the resignation of David Kyte, of Kyte Futures. Mr Kyte, a Liffe "local" - who speculates with his own money on the exchange - recently resigned his post following a dispute over fees.

Other thorny issues for Liffe include that of electronic trading - which still needs to be formally endorsed by the membership - and the ownership structure of the exchange. These topics will be dealt with at an extraordinary meeting next month.

The exchange is currently mutually owned by its members, but is understood to have employed Schroders, the UK merchant bank, and is said to be considering demutualisation, and possibly flotation.

One Liffe member said he was concerned the measures were "too little, too late". He added: "Only time will tell. Liffe has many plus points. It is independent, as opposed to the DTB which is largely owned by the big German banks, and we have a lot of expertise here. Everyone wants it to succeed."

Japan sells dollars to prop up yen

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

THE JAPANESE government yesterday took the money markets by surprise and intervened to prop up the yen.

Japanese officials announced their "decisive action" to bolster the yen in a rare public comment. The dollar lost more than two yen after the Bank of Japan sold dollars to boost its currency. The dollar fell as low as ¥139.52, down from an earlier high of ¥133.64.

Japan's Finance Minister, Hikaru Matsunaga, said: "The recent depreciation of the yen raises serious concern in view of the need for avoiding the exacerbation of large external imbalances and cannot be justified given Japan's potential economic strength."

"Today we took decisive action in the exchange market following the announcement of policy measures designed to set the Japanese economy onto a firm recovery path."

Robert Rubin, the US Treasury Secretary, welcomed the moves and called on Japan to put in place a "strong programme" quickly.

"We share the concern expressed by the Japanese Prime Minister about recent weakness in the yen, and in that context we welcome the action undertaken by the Japanese authorities in the exchange market to support the value of the yen," he said.

The move came as the government finally came up with the long-awaited economic stimulation package worth some ¥10 trillion (£45bn), aimed at fending off the prospect of the first recession in 23 years. The package includes tax cuts and massive public

spending and is the biggest of its kind in the nation's history.

However, its introduction caused a serious loss of face for Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, who made fiscal conservatism the cornerstone of his economic policies and had denounced tax cutting as a way out of the economic downturn.

Moreover, the package means Japan will have to incur a deficit budget in excess of the amount permitted by a law introduced by Mr Hashimoto just five months ago. It will therefore have a rough passage in parliament, which on Wednesday demonstrated its dislike for high public spending by passing the final stage of this year's conservative budget.

Details of the package have yet to be unveiled but it includes income tax cuts of ¥4 trillion over two years, designed to boost domestic spending which is at its lowest level in three decades.

The package was bigger than expected but greeted with less than enthusiasm by the domestic and international investors who have been braying for tax cuts, rather than the more timid economic stimulation measures announced earlier. Share prices in Tokyo rose cautiously by just below 1 per cent.

On Wednesday the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) warned that Japan was facing a 0.3 per cent economic contraction, the first since 1973. Pressure for a relaxation of Mr Hashimoto's conservative fiscal policies has come from countries around the world who fear that Japan's economic downturn will drag down the rest of the global economy.

Hyundai axes 14,000 'to stay competitive'

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

HYUNDAI, the car giant, yesterday announced plans to slash 30 per cent of its workforce - or almost 14,000 jobs - in a move that took the shine off a day that saw increasing signs of economic recovery in South Korea.

A company spokesman said Hyundai could only remain competitive if cuts of this order were made. Domestic sales dropped over 50 per cent in the first quarter of this year, while highly competitively priced exports only rose 19 per cent.

Job cuts could provoke labour unrest at Hyundai, which lost more than \$700m (£420m) of production early last year because of a strike against legislation that would have facilitated layoffs.

The recovery of the Asian country's economy had earlier received a large vote of confidence from international investors who scrambled to buy \$4bn (£2.4m) in government bonds issued on Wednesday. The response was so good that the government yesterday announced that it plans to issue \$9bn of sovereign debt this year.

The \$4bn issue in New York was the first ever debt issue aimed at foreign investors. This is also the first time the Korean government borrowed under its own name, rather than via the state-owned Korea Development Bank or Export and Import Bank of Korea.

Bond dealers said the successful completion of this issue cleared an overhang which was hovering over the Asian bond market unsure of the response. It is also expected that the bond will set a new benchmark for Asian debt.

Those rushing to buy the bonds clearly believe the new Korean government is serious in its economic and fiscal reform proposals and are in effect endorsing the clean bill of health which the Korean economy has recently received from the International Monetary Fund.

Further good news for the South-east Asian region came from McDonald's, which said it planned to invest about \$1.5bn in the Asia-Pacific area in the next three years, expressing confidence it could weather the region's economic problems as it built new markets to offset weak US sales.

New Look valued at £300m ahead of stock market flotation in June

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

TOM SINGH is set to become one of Britain's richest shopkeepers in June when he floats his New Look fashion chain on the stock market with a value of £300m.

Mr Singh, who founded the business in Worthing in 1969, owns 29 per cent of the company. This will rise to 33 per cent following the float, valuing his stake at £100m.

This is on top of the £170m he and his family received three years ago when he sold a controlling stake to a group of ven-



Tom Singh: £100m stake

ture capitalists including Barclays Private Equity and PPM Ventures.

It will be the second time New Look has tried for a stock

market flotation. It abandoned its first attempt in 1994 due to volatile stock market conditions. Since then, it has considered a reverse takeover of Etam and also looked at Oasis Stores last year after it issued two profits warnings.

New Look is raising £100m from the float. Half will be used to pay down debt and to redeem preference shares. The rest will be used to fund store expansion.

New Look has 440 stores but it wants to add a further 150, of which 50 will be in towns and cities such as Kingston-upon-Thames and Edinburgh where the company is not represented.

Jim Hodgkinson, the former head of B&Q, has been confirmed as chief executive. Gavin Aldred, the former joint managing director is stepping down from the main board though he will remain with the company.

New Look recorded profits of £33m on sales of £242m last year. Boardroom pay will be adjusted on flotation. Last year, Mr Singh earned £707,000 including £187,000 salary and £480,000 of bonuses. Mr Aldred was paid £543,000 including bonuses of £350,000. On flotation, bonuses will be limited to no more than 50 per cent of salary.

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Lloyd's List Publishing confirms float plans

By Andrew Yates

LLOYD'S List Publishing (LLP), which owns the world's oldest daily newspaper, yesterday confirmed plans to come to market.

The flotation of the former publishing arm of the Lloyd's of London insurance market will see four directors enter the ranks of media millionaires and give hundreds of employees a share bonanza.

Shares in LLP have been priced at 285p, valuing the group at £137.5m, far higher than estimates of £125m and the £82.5m group's management

paid for the business in 1995.

David Gilbertson, chief executive and former editor of Lloyd's List, is selling shares worth £456,000 in the flotation and will retain a stake worth £1.4m. Stuart Wallis, the chairman of LLP, who has already amassed a fortune from the sale of the pharmaceuticals group Fisons and who used to supply print for Lloyd's List, will own shares worth £1.8m. Peter Miller, finance director, and deputy chairman Ian Lindsay-Smith will become paper millionaires.

LLP is due to start trading on 17 April.

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STOCK MARKETS

Indices	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	6105.50	50.30	0.83	6134.90	4231.60	3.28
FTSE 250	5629.30	8.20	0.15	5662.80	4384.20	3.00
FTSE 350	2820.40	20.50	0.71	2934.00	2089.50	3.24
FTSE All Share	2844.25	18.91	0.67	2856.89	2070.00	3.22
FTSE SmallCap	2634.30	3.00	0.11	2641.40	2182.10	2.90
FTSE Pre-100	1410.30	1.80	0.13	1415.30	1225.20	3.25
FTSE AIM	1082.20	4.60	0.44	1095.70	965.90	1.06
Dow Jones	9008.32	98.65	1.11	9094.76	6356.78	1.56
Nikkei	16536.66	160.34	0.98	20510.79	14468.21	0.92
Hang Seng	11342.02	27.56	0.24	16820.31	7909.13	3.56
Dax	5317.22	47.76	0.91	5357.05	3286.96	1.53

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
UK 7.55 1.11 7.54 0.48 5.75 1.87 5.67 2.07	US 5.66 0.16 5.73 0.59 5.58 1.30 5.58 1.29	Japan 0.88 0.13 0.70 0.02 1.94 0.35 2.57 0.32
Germany 3.63 0.29 3.92 0.52 4.85 1.07 5.40 1.28		

Money Market Rates	Bond Yields
3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr	3 month 1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
MFI Furniture 95.00 9.00 10.47	JFE Sports 536.00 46.00 7.90
Womans Amer 2230.00 188.00 9.07	Galen Holdings 490.50 39.50 5.67
Sun Life & Prov 596.00 36.00 6.43	Box Airways 514.50 22.00 3.46
BTX 206.25 10.75 5.30	Johnston Press 219.50 7.00 3.08

CURRENCIES

S/E				DM/E				¥/E			
	1	2	3		1	2	3		1	2	3
1.650				1.000				206			
1.600				0.950				204			
1.550				0.900				202			
1.500				0.850				200			
1.450				0.800				198			
1.400				0.750				196			
1.350				0.700				194			
1.300				0.650				192			
1.250				0.600				190			
1.200				0.550				188			
1.150				0.500				186			
1.100				0.450				184			
1.050				0.400				182			
1.000				0.350				180			
0.950				0.300				178			
0.900				0.250				176			
0.850				0.200				174			
0.800				0.150				172			
0.750				0.100				170			
0.700				0.050				168			
0.650				0.000				166			
0.600								164			
0.550								162			
0.500								160			
0.450								158			
0.400								156			
0.350								154			
0.300								152			
0.250								150			
0.200								148			
0.150								146			
0.100								144			
0.050								142			
0.000								140			

Pound	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago	Dollar	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.5733	+0.56c	1.6225	Sterling	0.5976	-0.20p	0.6163
D-Mark	3.0445	+0.84p	2.7950	D-Mark	1.8201	-0.04p	1.7236
Yen	217.71	-32.80	285.44	Yen	130.15	-42.50	126.85
£ Index	107.30	-0.10	59.40	S Index	109.30	-0.80	105.80

OTHER INDICATORS			
	at 5pm	Change	Day
Brent Oil (\$)	13.17	0.19	16.83
Gold (\$)	309.65	-0.10	348.05
Silver (\$)	8.41	-0.05	4.77

	Index	Chg	Yr Ago	Feed
GDP	114.10	2.90	110.88	Feb
Base Rates	180.30	4.34	155.03	Feb
Base Rates	7.25	6.00		

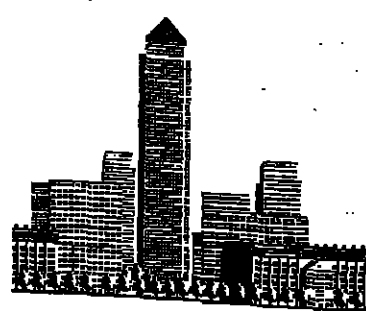
www.bloomberg.com

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.4528	Malta (lira)	0.6365
Austria (schillings)	20.70	Netherlands (guilder)	3.3210
Belgium (franc)	60.84	New Zealand (\$)	2.9187
Canada (\$)	2.3216	Norway (krone)	12.32
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8561	Portugal (escudo)	300.38
Denmark (krone)	11.32	Saudi Arabia (rial)	0.0962
Finland (markka)	9.0213	Singapore (\$)	2.5490
France (franc)	3.8857	Spain (peseta)	248.35
Germany (mark)	2.9604	South Africa (rand)	8.0804
Greece (drachma)	512.56	Sweden (krona)	12.86
Hong Kong (\$)	12.57	Switzerland (franc)	2.4661
Ireland (pound)	1.1688	Thailand (baht)	60.34
Israel (shekel)	5.6789	Turkey (lira)	369.811
Italy (lira)	2826	USA (\$)	1.6341
Japan (yen)	217.79		
Malaysia (ringgit)	5.8301		

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

Be realistic: rates can't come down yet



OUTLOOK
ON THE MONETARY
POLICY COMMITTEE'S
DILEMMA, THE
POSSIBILITY OF AN
RAC FLOAT, AND TWO
EAGERLY AWAITED
BID DECISIONS

FEW PEOPLE have much confidence in the ability of professional economists to predict the future, including most of the economics profession itself. Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, even has his own favourite joke about it - that there are three kinds of economists, those who can count and those who can't.

This scepticism about economic forecasts is more than shared by those running businesses or working in manufacturing. Executives and unionists alike just do not believe that the Bank of England's eight-person MPC has got a grip on how bad it is out there in the real world. The R-word has become common currency, at least in manufacturing. In industry, the recessions of the early 1980s and early 1990s are still a raw memory for many. In manufacturing, the future looks far bleaker than the slightly too soft a landing for the economy still being predicted within the Bank of England.

So no sooner did the Bank deliver what its critics wanted yesterday, by not raising interest rates, than they moved on to demanding an announcement that the next move in rates would be downwards. The unfortunate truth is that reductions are at least several months away, and an increase can not yet be ruled out. The MPC is split between one group wanting to raise rates and one wanting to wait and see. All are looking for signs of the economy slowing before they will start thinking about boost-

ing it again by reducing borrowing costs. The evidence is not decisive enough yet, however much anguish the strong pound is causing some sections of business.

Even less realistic is the idea that a quarter or half point reduction in interest rates will bring the pound back down to earth. There is no magic link between interest rates and the exchange rate; a quarter per cent off one will not translate automatically into a certain percentage off the other. If on the other hand the MPC decided to lop a full point off base rates, putting more money into home-buyers' pockets and encouraging people to borrow, it would put up the economy no end, stoke up future inflation and put overseas investors off sterling at a stroke. The pound would dive, the economy, even manufacturing, would boom, and everybody would be happy - until the time came to slam on the brakes again.

Getting away from this pattern is precisely why we now have an MPC.

The way ahead for the RAC

IF YOU ARE thinking of trying to carpe diem the Royal Automobile Club, where spoils of anything between £20,000 and £40,000 per member could be on offer in the event of demutualisation, forget it. The waiting list to join the club in Pall Mall, with its sister

golf course at Woodcote Park, is six months long and to gain acceptance, you need to be proposed by two of the club's existing 12,000 members. Given that any addition to the membership would be dilutive, no one will be rushing to propose you.

The RAC has had Dresdner Kleinwort Benson and Slaughter & May examining the possibilities for a float for around 12 months now, but it has taken the precipitous action of Jeffrey Rose, the now deposed chairman, in appealing to members over the head of the board, to bring matters to a head. According to Mr Rose, he got fed up with waiting for the board to make up its mind. Without telling fellow directors, he therefore wrote to members inviting them to requisition a meeting and get everything moving.

This they appear only too glad to do, so the board really had no option but to cave in, as it did yesterday, and promise a full consultation on demutualisation. The way in which this all came about bears revisiting. The RAC began life as a 1905 Pall Mall social and sports club for the early enthusiasts of the automobile. In time it developed the motoring services arm which most of us now recognise as the RAC.

Perhaps oddly, given that it is owned by a club in Pall Mall, this has evolved into a highly successful commercial enterprise with nearly 6 million customers, or associate members. It has fewer members than its arch rival, the AA, but it is generally considered

to have been very much more innovative and switched on in recent years. The RAC's constitution is sufficiently complex for there to be room for doubt, but on the face of it these associate members have no voting or ownership rights. These lie entirely with members of the Pall Mall club.

None the less, it is reasonable to have some sympathy for the dithering way in which the board and the company have dealt with the matter thus far. Associate members are going to be mighty pissed off with the idea of further enriching a lot of dusty old masons propping up the bar in Pall Mall if there's nothing in it for them. In establishing a flotation mechanism, then, the board has to ensure there's something for the customer too, or they might just desert to the competition.

In other words, the issues are not quite as clear cut as Mr Rose would like us to believe. How the board is going to resolve these conflicts is anyone's guess. One for Andrew Regan of Co-op fame, perhaps. In this case, free car parking could presumably be arranged for the handing over of confidential documents. But then again, perhaps not.

Acid tests for Mrs Blockit

AFFICIONADOS of the ins and outs of government mergers policy are awaiting with some anticipation a couple of decisions that

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, is due to make over the next week. Two bids are awaiting her go-ahead - the Texas Utilities offer for Energy Group, owner of Eastern Electricity, and the Investcorp bid for Watmough and BPC. Investcorp has already gone unconditional as to acceptances, while Texas is pretty much assured of success in the absence of a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Neither bid gives rise to any more than the slightest of competition concerns but, even so, there is some possibility they will be referred. In both cases, unions have raised the bogey of widespread job losses in the event of clearance, the theory being that because the bidders are offering more than rivals they might seek to recoup the difference with more swinging cost cuts. In the case of Texas, up to 5,000 jobs are alleged to be at risk, and 1,500 with Investcorp. Both bidders have given guarantees on this front, but Mrs Beckett is being asked not to trust them.

Reputedly, Mrs Beckett has asserted that the only determinant of mergers policy should be competition. The question is whether she will stick to those guidelines in these cases or confirm her growing reputation in the City as someone who is temperamentally ill disposed to all mergers and takeovers, however benign. Will jobs and union pressure move back to centre stage in mergers policy, is Mrs Beckett a Mrs Blockit, or does she mean what she says? We'll see.

Slump for Rolls as the old bow out

SALES of Rolls-Royce and Bentley luxury cars almost halved in the first quarter of the year as production of old four-door models was wound down and a new model introduced.

Vickers, the parent company which is in the process of selling Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, said retail sales fell to 251 cars from 446 cars in the first quarter of 1997. In Japan they fell by 81 per cent to six units. Rolls-Royce launched the Silver Seraph in March, its first new model in almost two decades.

"We have been overwhelmed by the positive reception the new Rolls-Royce Seraph has received from customers and orders are coming in every day," Graham Morris, the chief executive of the car unit, said.

Vickers said quarterly sales were down as expected because of the phase-out of previous four-door models at the end of 1997 and the ramp-up of production of replacement models.

Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars, which have traditionally occupied the uppermost rung in car price ladder, have always had a limited market.

The group's average capacity has been less than 2,000 cars a year, with prices of each car starting from a minimum of £150,000.

Another reason for lower sales in the first quarter was the gradual roll-out of its new model, the Silver Seraph, which was launched at the Geneva Motor Show in March.

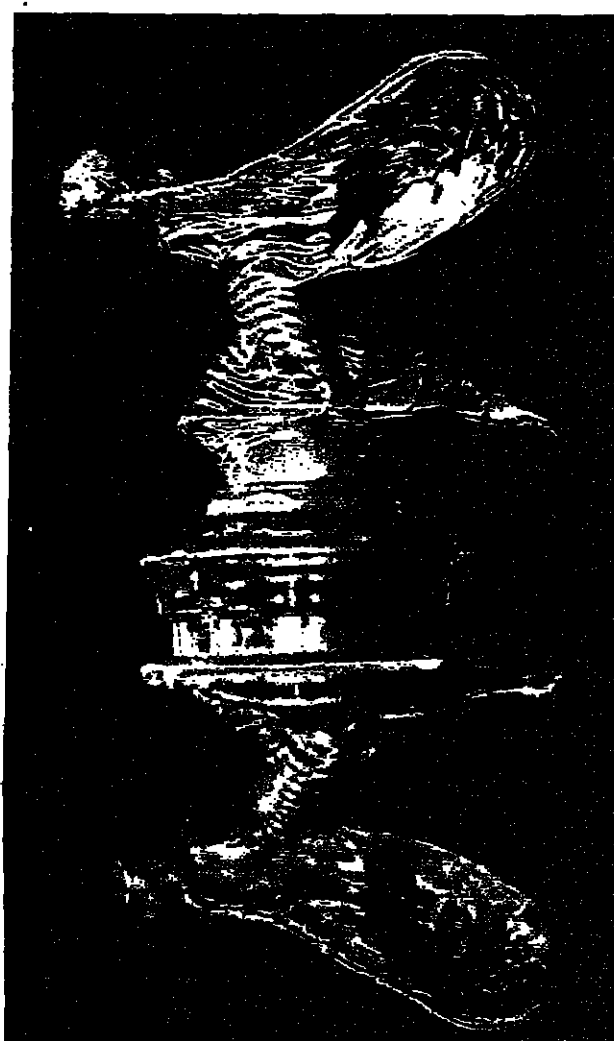
Vickers said orders have been received ahead of introduction of the £155,000 car as it was progressively launched around the world during the month. Retail deliveries have just started.

The Seraph, which is powered by an engine made by BMW, took its inspiration from another old Rolls favourite, the Silver Cloud.

Rolls' first car was the Silver Ghost, which was built in 1906 and described at the time as "best car in the world".

Sales of Rolls and Bentley cars, considered the ultimate status symbol, fell in most of their markets in the quarter. Only 151 cars were sold in Britain in the first quarter, against 236 previously.

In the Americas, quarterly sales fell to 51 from 92, while in



Moving image: Sales of Rolls - symbolised by the Spirit of Ecstasy emblem - fell, but are now said to be improving

continental Europe they fell to 19 from 35. In Japan, only six cars were sold during the quarter against 32 in the first quarter of 1997.

Mr Morris, said sales of its existing Bentley two-door range were progressing well, with the Bentley Azure seeing a "very strong demand".

Vickers is in exclusive talks to sell Rolls-Royce to BMW for £340m. Volkswagen has increased an earlier offer and is be-

lieved to have bid between £360m and £380m and hopes to negotiate with Vickers once a period giving BMW exclusive negotiating rights ends. Daimler has ruled itself out of the running.

Bernd Pischetsrieder, the BMW chairman, has so far remained confident of winning the battle despite a higher bid from Volkswagen. Any offer has to be approved by Vickers' shareholders.

-Agencies

Ladbroke chief's pay cut is just a matter of timing

By Andrew Yates

THE CHIEF executive of Ladbroke received a pay cut of more than 40 per cent last year despite presiding over a sharp rise in the stock market valuation and profits at the betting to hotels group.

Peter George received a total of £745,000 in 1997 compared with almost £1.3m for the previous 12 months. The total remuneration of Ladbroke's four executive directors fell by more than a third to less than £2.8m.

The fall in pay was due to the timing of payments from a long-term executive incentive scheme rather than a bold move by the company to act on the Government's desire to curb wage inflation. In fact Mr George's underlying pay has risen sharply.

He received a bonus of £270,000 in 1997 compared with £98,000 in the previous year and, ignoring the incentive scheme, his pay packet leapt by 40 per cent.

Mr George was also granted share options currently worth £185,000. Since the year end he has exercised 194,000 shares, making a profit of more than £250,000.

Ladbroke's directors are also likely to receive a substantial hike in pay this year as its incentive scheme is due to pay out in 1998. It is likely to



Peter George: Underlying pay has risen sharply

swell directors' pay packets with at least an extra £1m.

Ladbroke's profits rose to £226m (£163m) in 1997 thanks to a strong performance from its Hilton Hotel business and its betting shops. The group is currently awaiting the results of an MMC enquiry into its acquisition of the Coral betting chain.

Analysis believe it could be forced to sell hundreds of betting shops to get the green light for the controversial deal.

Meanwhile CK Chow, the chief executive of GKN, the Challenger tank to Westland Helicopter group, received a total of £793,000 last year, a rise of £144,000 from 1996.

Sir David Lees, the group's chairman, who stood down from his role as chief executive at the start of last year, saw his pay shrink from £484,000 to £221,000.

BTR reveals details of £2bn payout to shareholders

Industrial conglomerate BTR announced yesterday the details of its plan to return £2bn to shareholders. The company had announced the plan in March. BTR said it would return £1.5bn within the first half of this year, with the remaining £500m after April 1999. As part of the plan BTR will issue and offer one B share for every ordinary share held on May 8. The B shares will have a nominal value of 36.5p each and carry restricted preferential capital rights.

National Express airport deal

National Express Group has been selected as preferred bidder to buy a 99-year lease to operate Stewart International Airport in New York State. The train and bus operator's \$35m (£21m) bid was submitted under the US Federal Aviation Administration's PILOT privatisation programme, under which five US airports will be selected for privatisation. Stewart Airport is a regional two-runway hub located about 80 miles north of New York city. It has around 800,000 passengers a year and 80,000 tonnes of cargo.

Engineering unit sold

GEC Alsthom, the Franco-British energy and transport company, is buying Alcatel Alsthom's Cegelec engineering division, building up its business before an initial public offering later this year. Alcatel said in March it planned to sell the Cegelec unit to GEC Alsthom, its joint venture with GEC, as it focuses on making telecommunications equipment.

Compensation scheme levy

The Investors Compensation Scheme will raise a levy of £7.49m this month on the self-regulatory organisations (SROs), who will pass the costs on to their members in due course. The ICS is the "rescue fund" for customers of investment firms which have gone out of business. The levy will fund compensation payments relating to the 80 investment firms declared in default between April 1997 and March 1998. The Personal Investment Authority will pay £7.29m, while the Securities and Futures Authority will pay £206,000.

Bryant debt placement

Bryant Group has completed an \$81m private placement of 10-year senior notes to US insurance companies. The unsecured notes mature in full in April 2008. The proceeds, swapped into £49.5m at a 7.04 per cent fixed interest rate, have been used to repay short-term bank borrowings, it said. Bryant group said the placement was in line with long-term strategy.

James Keen

OUR ARTICLE "UBS pays £20,000 fine after breach of SFA rules" (25 September 1996) reported the outcome of disciplinary proceedings brought by the Securities and Futures Authority against UBS and two of its traders, one of whom was James Keen. We wish to make it clear that the SFA did not suggest that Mr Keen had deliberately concealed losses, conducted secret trades, or that he acted dishonestly in any way. We regret our report suggested otherwise and we have apologised to Mr Keen and paid his legal costs and appropriate damages.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
AFR Systems (P)	0.256m (0.364m)	-1.501m (-0.913m)	-16.2p (-10.5p)	nil
Bridgen Industries (P)	224.8m (240.5m)	14.51m (6.09m)	13.1p (4.3p)	3.6p (3.2p)
BS Group (P)	7.25m (8.12m)	-0.188m (-1.42m)	-2.56p (16.2p)	5.0p (5.0p)
Carton Engineering (P)	20.44m (20.09m)	1.56m (1.22m)	30.6p (25.4p)	6.0p (7.2p)
Leads Holdings (P)	9.542m (0.111m)	-0.272m (-0.175m)	-1.80p (-1.71p)	nil

(P) - Profit (H) - Income 1 EPS is pre-exceptionals

Sales surge at John Lewis Partnership stores

Sales at the John Lewis Partnership, which includes department stores and Waitrose supermarkets, rose by 19.8 per cent in the week to 4 April and were up 7.3 per cent in the nine weeks to 4 April, the partnership said yesterday.

Department store sales rose 14.1 per cent in the week to 4 April compared with the same week a year earlier, while Waitrose sales surged by almost 25 per cent in the week to April 4.

In the nine weeks to 4 April, department store sales were up 7.7 per cent on the same year earlier period.

The latest week was one of complex comparisons, John Lewis' assistant director of trading, Nigel Brotherton, said in a statement.

"The equivalent week last year was the week following Easter."

John Lewis sales rose 9.4 per cent in the week to 28 March compared with the same week a year before.

Shareholders OK Lonrho deals

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

LONRHO took another step towards turning itself into a focused mining company yesterday when shareholders approved plans for the £177m purchase of Anglo-American's 21 per cent stake in the business while approving the £167m purchase of the Tavistock coal mine from JCI.

At an emergency meeting in central London yesterday, attended by only 100 share-

holders, the resolutions were passed by 79.3 per cent of the votes cast.

Lonrho's resolutions did not go through unchallenged. Tiny Rowland, the Lonrho founder and former chairman who has been placing adverts in newspapers voicing his criticism of the board's plans, did not attend but his solicitor appeared as his representative.

Matthew Knight raised some of Mr Rowland's points, which included questions over the board's optimism on the out-

look for the coal price and the increase in Lonrho's debts to uncomfortable levels. He also questioned why Anglo-American had sold 40 million Lonrho shares to SBC Warburg at a discount to the market price.

One private shareholder asked whether directors' pay would now be reduced as Lonrho would be a much smaller business.

Yesterday's agreement, combined with the group's plans to demerge its non-mining operations into a new company, Lon-

rho Africa, was a milestone on Lonrho's road to casting off its sprawling colonial conglomerate heritage and becoming a mining group with coal, platinum and gold interests in Africa.

Under the terms of the deal, Anglo-American is swapping a 21 per cent stake in Lonrho which it has held since 1968, for JCI's share in the HJ Just gold mine and JCI's stake in platinum producer Amplats. JCI, through a transaction with Investec Bank, is then selling the Lonrho shares on to Lonrho for around £176.7m.

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Reassurance for LLP float

LLOYD'S List Publishing (LLP) is sailing towards the stock market with a full head of steam. Since the management bought the business from the Lloyd's of London insurance market, turnover has grown rapidly and profits before tax and interest have almost doubled to £10.3m.

That may seem strange for a group whose flagship brand is *Lloyd's List*, which is no doubt a must read for the shipping and insurance industry but hardly flies off newsagent's shelves. However, over the last few years LLP has turned itself into a much more diversified group, using its strong brand name to start up new titles, branch out into book publishing and conferencing and develop a powerful shipping database. The new management has also wielded the corporate knife to push margins up to an impressive 21 per cent.

Most of the cost cutting has already been completed but LLP should be able to continue to grow revenues briskly by putting its titles on the internet and expanding into electronic publishing. Just as importantly the flotation will give the group the chance to make acquisitions and reduce its onerous debt burden.

LLP has been priced at 285p a share, putting it on a historical p/e of 22. While not cheap, the stock has been valued on a discount to rivals such as *Metal Bulletin*, Reuters or Reed which trade on multiples in the mid to high-twenties. That should ensure that the shares get off to a good start when the group launches on the stock market on 17 April.

Banking on US deals

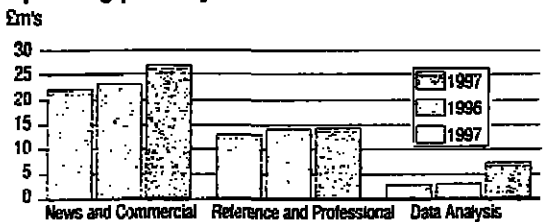
SO IS the bubble ever going to burst in the UK banking sector? As soon as the bull run in UK banking stocks started to

Lloyd's List Publishing: At a glance

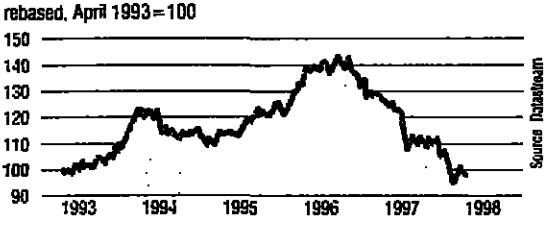
Market value: £137.5m, placing price 285p

Three-year record	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£m)	37.8	40.5	48.4
Pre-tax profits, before interest (£m)	5.6	7.6	10.3
Earnings per share (p)	-	-	12.9
Dividends per share (p)	-	-	-

Operating profit by division



Media sector v market



grind to a halt, news of yet another merger injected new life into the shares.

Following the announcement earlier this week of a £100bn mega-merger between Travelers and Citicorp, the US financial services giants, UK banking shares soared. But, as the week has gone on, the pace of trading has slowed, and with good reason. There is no logical argument why UK banks should be at all affected by the deal.

Take the retail banks. There are certainly growing commercial pressures for the industry to consolidate. But that has more to do with the influx of competition from the likes of supermarkets and hungry competitors such as Virgin than the Travelers-Citicorp deal.

What about the UK's rapidly dwindling number of merchant banks? The argument here is that a bank has to be a global player to survive. Even if this is true, it is hardly relevant to the UK.

Most UK merchant banks – Close Brothers, Singer & Friedlander and the like – are specialised outfits. They were never competing with the big boys even prior to Monday's news. And how about the UK groups which have both retail and investment banking arms? Barclays and NatWest are unlikely to reverse their recent decisions to scale back on investment banking, and HSBC – which owns Midland – is not known for its hasty decision-making. HSBC could be mulling an acquisition, but it is difficult to believe this banking giant has been pressured by the Travelers-Citicorp link-up.

Monday's share price rises look like a knee-jerk reaction in an already pricey sector. Although there may be some mileage to be had in selective buying of banking stocks, the sector as a whole is beginning to look overheated. And recent evidence that UK fund managers' brief flirtation with the sector could be coming to a

close seems to suggest the peak could come sooner rather than later. Buyers beware.

New Look arrives at last

NEW LOOK, the women's fashion retailer, has been threatening to come to the stock market for so long that owner Tom Singh must feel a huge sense of relief now that it had to pull its float four years ago due to wobbly market conditions. And in the last 18 months it has considered a reverse takeover of Etam and Oasis when they hit problems.

New Look is certainly an impressive growth story. Its store numbers have grown from 150 to 400 in five years and annual profits have shown 50 per cent compound growth over the same period. It prices its garments keenly for those who love a bargain and, with short lead times, it can order more of good sellers and cut its losses on those that bomb.

Management has been strengthened considerably with the appointment of Howard Dyer from Hamley's as chairman, Jim Hodgkinson from Kingfisher as chief executive and Tony Colyer from Alders as finance director. Trading is also good. New Look made profits of £33m on sales of £242m last year. And in the first quarter of this year like-for-like sales are up 9 per cent.

So far so good. The problem for New Look could be one of timing and here, one is almost tempted to question the quality of the advice. The retail sector is extremely fragile at the moment with fashion particularly weak after a shock profits warning from Next and Oasis' problems still fresh in the memory. Monsoon made the mistake of pricing its stock too highly in December and its shares have rarely risen above the issue price since.

New Look has a good story to tell investors but it will have to be priced keenly if it is not to suffer the same fate.

Sale gives Blagden £160m war chest

BLAGDEN Industries, the diversified industrial group, yesterday said it had a war chest of about £160m for organic growth and acquisitions after announcing it was selling its packaging unit for £98m.

David Roache, finance director, said: "We are not about to spend money tomorrow or get on the bandwagon that appears to be running in the speciality chemicals sector of paying excessively high prices for businesses."

He said the group has already targeted a number of potential acquisitions in the £60m-£80m range.

"We are not going to spend money on businesses that are going for 18 times earnings," he said. "If it takes us time to buy a business with growth potential at a sensible price then it takes us time."

Blagden will sell the packaging unit to Drum Holdings in a move that makes it the latest UK company to focus on its speciality chemicals.

It said it would receive £82.6m in cash, while Drum would assume £6.5m in Blagden debt and other monies. Drum is an investment company established by NatWest Equity Partners and Union Bank of Switzerland.

By selling the division, which makes up nearly 60 per cent of sales, Blagden will generate resources to boost investments in an area analysts said has become increasingly attractive in recent years.

Other chemical companies including Elementis, Laporte and ICI have shed major assets in the last year to build speciality operations, a diverse business that makes raw materials for food, consumer products, cars, paint and other manufacturing.

Blagden shares surged 29p or 18 per cent to close at 188.5p.

The UK and European speciality chemicals industry has seen a spate of corporate activity in recent years as companies move to position themselves in what they see as more profitable ends of the industry. The largest deals were ICI's purchase of Unilever's chemical assets for £4.8bn and Clariant's purchase of Hoechst's speciality chemical assets for £1.9bn last year. Already this year, Ciba outbid Hercules to buy Allied Colloids last month for more than £1bn, and a week ago Akzo Nobel announced it was in talks to acquire Courtaulds, Britain's third-biggest chemical company.

Blagden said that when the sale was completed it would focus activities on its growing speciality chemical businesses by reinvesting the proceeds to accelerate the organic growth and to finance the acquisition of a new chemicals business. Blagden's packaging business is a leading supplier of steel drums to the European oil and steel industry through seven new plants in the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Spain. It makes or reconditions more than 10 million steel drums a year, the second-biggest such company in Europe.

Blagden reported a 12 per cent increase in pre-tax profits before exceptional items to £16.4m in the year to the end-December 1997. The consensus analysts' forecast was for pre-tax profit of £16.5m. Sales dropped to £224.5m from £240.5m, which it said was "largely due to exchange translation impact of £22.1m". The company boosted its dividend to 3.6p from 3.2p a year earlier.

— Agencies

Three-way bid tussle for Baring Tribune

By Lea Paterson

EMBATTLED Baring Tribune Investment Trust became the subject of a three-way bid tussle yesterday when Edinburgh Fund Managers (EFM), together with one of its investment trusts, made a bid for the company.

Baring Tribune said it had received an approach from EFM and Edinburgh UK Tracker Trust which "might or might not lead to an offer".

The trust has already been approached by Legal & General and Fleming Claverhouse, and a decision is expected by the end of the month.

Baring Tribune's problems started at the end of last year when the investment trust, which has been trading at a discount to its asset value, was targeted by Advance UK, a venture fund. After buying up large chunks of Baring Tribune's shares, Advance UK tried to force the investment trust to convert into a unit trust. This would allow shareholders to realise the full value of the underlying assets.

Advance UK's proposals were voted down in a shareholders meeting.

JJB falls further amid sportswear worries

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

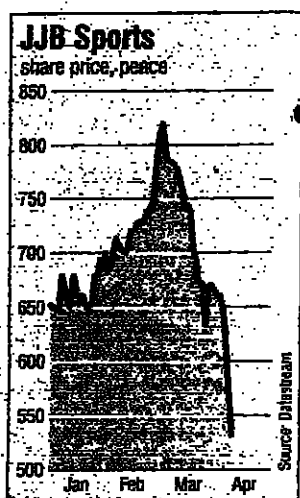
SHARES in JJB Sports, the sports retailer, fell another 46p to 536p yesterday as speculation continued that the sportswear market is suffering from weak sales. The shares have now lost 35 per cent of their value since their 822.5p peak just five weeks ago.

Shares in rivals were also weak. Blacks Leisure lost 10p to 382.5p while John David Sports gave up a further 2.5p to 111.5p. Much of the volume in JJB stock appeared to be from small investors, possibly reacting to a "sell" recommendation in an investment magazine. This prompted Simon Cawkwell, the bear raider known in the market as Evil Knivel, to close a large short position in the stock.

He said yesterday that he first started short-selling (selling stock he does not yet own and buying it back later at a lower price) when the JJB share price was around 750p in mid-March. Yesterday he bought back a line of stock at 560p which he had sold at 597p. "The market is clearly very nervous about margins in this industry but enough is enough," he said.

JJB reports full year results on 22 April with broker SBC Warburg expecting £33.5m against £20.7m the previous year. The company would not comment on its own trading ahead of its results. However it attributed the weakness in its share price to profit-taking due to investor nervousness about the retail sector after the Next profits warning.

Other factors, the company said, could include the statements allegedly made by Newcastle United directors that replica football shirts were over-priced and rumours that Sports Division, the sports superstore operator, might delay its flotation.



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Easter parade of rumours helps Footsie higher

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

UNCHANGED interest rates, a strong New Year display and a veritable Easter parade of takeover rumours pushed Footsie to within a whisker of its peak.

The index ended 50.3 points higher at 6,105.5 - just 0.3 below its high. Supporting shares were also in form.

MFI Furniture led the takeover candidates, gaining 9p to 95p in busy trading. A 145p strike from Kingfisher was the popular guess.

The shares touched 160p last year. They have been in a ragged retreat since disappointing sales figures were announced last month. One big institutional seller was cleared this week, coinciding with the outbreak of takeover gossip.

On the financial pitch the spotlight was directed at fund managers Perpetual and M&G. Halifax, of course, and insurance group Royal & Sun Alliance were put forward as potential predators, so was an

array of overseas groups, including Goldman Sachs.

Standard Chartered added 28p to 97p and HSBC, where rumours of a major deal erupted in the Far East this week, put on 30p to 1.982p.

Simon Whittles and Karl Green at Charterhouse Tilney describe Standard as an obvious bid target and say: "Even the pipe dream of a merger between HSBC and Lloyds TSB should not be entirely dismissed".

Prudential Corporation, 24.5p higher at 947.5p, would, they say, be a good fit for any leading bank.

Securicor, the security group, advanced 13p to 419p. Stories resurfaced that it is on the verge of clinching a deal to sell its 40 per cent interest in the Cellnet mobile telephone group to the major shareholder, BT, firm at 660p.

There was even talk of a strike, presumably from BT.

Allied Domecq, the drinks group, was another back in the corporate arena. A manage-

ment buyout for its pubs spread was the story. A figure of £2.2bn was bandied about.

Rumours that Allied, up 11p to a 632p four-year high, planned to split into two, possibly merging its spirits division with one of its rivals and becoming a stand-alone retailer (pubs and various franchise concepts) have also gone the rounds. There was also speculative interest in Highland Distilleries, the Famous Grouse Scotch whisky group which is closely related to Remy Cointreau of France.

Encouraging sales figures from the John Lewis Partnership helped selected retailers. Debenhams put on 16.5p to 367.5p and Marks & Spencer 8.5p to 590p. Asda continued to draw support from Morgan Stanley, gaining a further 6p to 218p.

Great Universal Stores targeted 16p to 795p while target Argos was little changed at 638p.

It was still a relegation-like

struggle among the sports retailers, particularly JJB Sports which, it appears, has attracted the attention of Bear Stearns.

Simon Cawkwell, aka Evil Knave, he claimed to have started shorting the shares last month. They fell a further 46p to 53p (after £2.5p). The price was 822.5p last month.

Black Leisure, leader of the sports retailing boom, fell 10p to 382.5p.

BTR improved 10.75p to 206.25p; it restated its intention to hand out £7bn to shareholders. The first £1.5bn will be returned in the first half of this year; the rest next year. Already nearly 8 million shares have been bought at 195p.

British Airways headed the list of blue chip fallers. The shares dived 23p to 614.5p on worries about the American Airlines link and cautious comments from Salomon Smith Barney.

PizzaExpress shaded to 796.5p after Janus, the US fund manager which has developed a taste for the stock, revealed it had sold 1.1 million shares, cutting its stake to just over 10 per cent.

Orbis, the security group, moved ahead to 54p, a two-day gain of 6p. Butterfield, the stockbroker, is keen on the shares.

Share Spotlight
share price, pence

AMJASONDJFM

Lopes, the advertising and marketing group, held at 43.5p as rival Incepta disclosed it had for the second time this week lifted its stake and now has 19.41 per cent. The two held takeover talks last year.

Rosebery, the household textiles retailer with 450 outlets, held at 285p. Robert Fleming Securities put out a buy recommendation.

Internet Technology put added 6.5p to 65p on the SG Securities profit estimates.

British Thomson, into computer point-of-sale materials after a reverse takeover, put on 6p to 36.5p. The shares returned from suspension this week. The deal was struck at 30p a share.

Integrated Asset Management, the fledgling financial group suspended last year, 29.9 per cent shareholders, John Bouth and Emanuel Artib, who are acquiring shares from Ferdinand Lips and the Swiss bank he runs.

TAKING STOCK

MICROCAP Growth Trust,

specialising in hi-tech shares, made its debut at 52.5p. It is 48.4 per cent owned by an

Ofex-traded investment company, MAH, which has also acquired 25 per cent of

Chelverton Asset, manager of MicroCap. The trust intends to concentrate on companies with capitalisations of up to

£15m. Its partly paid shares were floated at 50p with a further 50p due in September. MAH is traded at 30.5p, giving a £3.4m capitalisation.

It arrived on Ofex last month.

ITE, running exhibitions in Russia and which was once paint group Cementone, has won the support of United News & Media, which has acquired a 4.76 per cent stake.

Part of the shareholding is the result of United exchanging royalties for shares. ITE is the creation of Lawrie

Lewis who sold the Blenheim exhibition business to the newspaper group. United paid 77.5p for its ITE shares; they rose 3.5p to 77p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The price is the latest twelve months' defined gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The share price is the closing price on the last day of the period. Other details: B - Buy; S - Sell; H - Hold; P - Put; C - Call; F - Forward; O - Other; G - Gilt; B - Bloomberg.

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Market Leaders: Top 20 volumes

at 5.40pm

FTSE 100 index hour by hour

1400 6073.5 Up 8.3

1500 6080.4 Up 6.9

1600 6087.4 Up 7.0

1700 6094.5 Up 7.1

1800 6101.6 Up 7.2

1900 6108.7 Up 7.3

2000 6115.8 Up 7.4

2100 6122.9 Up 7.5

2200 6130.0 Up 7.6

2300 6137.1 Up 7.7

2400 6144.2 Up 7.8

2500 6151.3 Up 7.9

2600 6158.4 Up 8.0

2700 6165.5 Up 8.1

2800 6172.6 Up 8.2

2900 6179.7 Up 8.3

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3100 6193.9 Up 8.5

3200 6201.0 Up 8.6

3300 6208.1 Up 8.7

3400 6215.2 Up 8.8

3500 6222.3 Up 8.9

3600 6229.4 Up 9.0

3700 6236.5 Up 9.1

3800 6243.6 Up 9.2

3900 6250.7 Up 9.3

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4200 6272.0 Up 9.6

4300 6279.1 Up 9.7

4400 6286.2 Up 9.8

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17500 7221.3 Up 22.9

17600 7228.4 Up 23.0

17700 7235.5 Up 23.1

17800 7242.6 Up 23.2

17900 7250.0 Up 23.3

18000 7257.1 Up 23.4

18100 7264.2 Up 23.5

18200 7271.3 Up 23

Industry is hurting, but it's only one side of the story



DIANE COYLE
ON WHY THE MPC CANNOT PLEASE EVERYBODY

THERE has been a reprieve for all those lamenting the forthcoming destruction of manufacturing at the hand of Gordon Brown and the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, as the MPC decided yesterday to leave the cost of borrowing unchanged for another month.

The extent of lobbying of MPs, ministers and officials that has been taking place during the past few weeks is not to be underestimated, and the Chancellor deserves a special bravery award for standing by his determination to steer policy for the long-term stability of the economy.

It will be some time before we know whether the MPC's members wobbled this week in the face of the industrial onslaught, with a six-week delay before publication of the minutes of the latest meeting. They will shed fascinating insight into how much the committee has weighed considerations of growth in the export-reliant parts of the economy against the inflation target.

Most Bank-watchers believe the MPC remained split down the middle over a difficult and "finely balanced" decision as to whether rates should rise or remain unchanged. The next tactic from the industry lobby, however, is to start arguing for a reduction in interest rates. The weaker the figures for manufacturing output become month by month, the more voices will call for a rate cut, no matter how much the rest of the economy is decelerating.

Yet, hard as it might be to believe from the uproar, there is no serious problem with the general macro-management of the economy. Kenneth Clarke should have raised interest rates a bit more before the election last May, so the Bank has had to raise them more since. But by past standards, both fiscal and monetary policy are looking about right.

The Government's finances are heading towards balance at an acceptable pace and squeezing demand as much as can be reasonably expected from elected politicians voted in on a dual pledge not to raise taxes while improving public services. Loan and mortgage costs are also pretty close to where they ought to be: nobody is seriously arguing for a big rise – or fall – in their level, only for a quarter or half-point change.

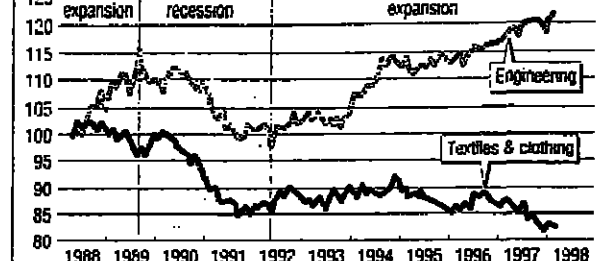
Getting it about right is the best that can be expected in the face of enormous uncertainties about economic prospects, and better than we have often managed in the past in this country.

Rather, the problem is one of "balance" or the mixed fortunes of different bits of the economy. This has been exacerbated by the strong pound, but not created by it. Manufacturing is in a steady decline as a share of the economy, and has been for at least 25 years.

Managing decline is no fun. And within manufacturing, some industries have proved much less able than others to adjust to the switch to high value-added production necessary to survive. While parts of engineering and food manu-

Diverging fortunes

Output index, 1988=100



Growth in profit margins

percentage change

	1994	1995	1996	1997
Food, drink and tobacco	0.7	-2.3	2.2	5.1
Textiles	-2.3	-3.9	-1.8	0.0
Clothing, leather and footwear	-4.5	-1.0	1.2	-0.5
Wood and wood products	-0.1	1.8	-4.0	-2.3
Pulp, paper, printing and publishing	-1.2	0.6	0.2	-1.5
Chemicals and man-made fibres	1.0	1.2	0.3	-2.2
Rubber and plastic products	-1.9	-2.6	0.8	-0.5
Other non-metallic products	1.0	0.9	-0.7	0.6
Basic metals	2.1	4.0	-0.1	-1.7
Fabricated metal products	-2.6	-1.1	1.5	0.1
Machinery and equipment N.E.C.	1.7	-1.3	0.3	-1.6
Electrical and optical equipment	0.4	-2.5	-2.2	-0.5
Transport equipment	1.1	1.8	0.5	0.0
Coke, nuclear fuel and other manufacturing	4.0	1.1	-2.9	5.0
Manufacturing total	0.4	-1.5	0.5	-1.4

facture have generally coped well, textiles and metal bashing see extinction looming. Every episode of sterling strength wipes out a bit more of the production base in these failing sectors. Who can blame them for their lobbying?

A detailed new report from Paribas, the investment bank, sheds some light on which parts have the most reason to complain. In the aggregate, the figures show that times are getting harder for manufacturers – but are not yet excruciating.

Production growth has slowed since September and is now flat. Export margins have shed their post-September 1992 gains because of falling export prices, but total profit margins in manufacturing have so far continued to increase. Employment has been rising too, according to the latest data.

The authors, Roger Beedell and Corey Miller, are actually very pessimistic about prospects for industry in the

aggregate. But the detail shows widely varying performances. Two big sectors – food, drink and tobacco, and engineering – are still growing at a reasonable pace, the latter mainly thanks to aerospace and transport equipment.

On the other hand, production in textiles, clothing and footwear, basic metals and wood products is falling at an uncomfortable clip. The first chart shows the gap that has emerged in production performance.

The Paribas analysis also shows that different sectors vary in their exposure to a slowdown in exports to Asia as a result of the troubles there. For example, more than a third of the tobacco industry's exports go to the region, but it accounts for only 5 per cent of the exports of rubber and plastics.

The textiles and clothing sector is vulnerable to import competition as a result of the fall in the Asian currencies against the pound, but it also

gets a boost from cheaper imports of its materials.

All in all, profit margins within manufacturing span a wide spectrum. The real pain at present is being suffered by the clothing and textile industry and by electrical equipment makers – both in different ways suffering from greater overseas competition.

The former simply has too many competitors in emerging economies with much cheaper labour costs. Its decline is probably terminal. The latter is seeing over-capacity in some products, such as computer components, due to heavy investment in a small number of other countries driving down prices. Investment cycles can be uncomfortably long but they eventually work themselves out.

Weaker manufacturing will of course eventually have an impact on the service industries as well. It is likely to spill over first into retailing and transport. The Paribas research suggests that other services are substantially less sensitive to a downturn in manufacturing, with an overall effect of an eventual 0.4 per cent drop in services output for every 1 per cent drop in manufacturing output.

But with different services also growing at vastly different rates, from booming business services, finance and IT to the rather more subdued retailing and no-growth public sector services, the Bank of England has no choice but to look at the averages. This will suit some businesses a lot more than others.

The trouble is that in the policy debate the booming sectors are not bothering to cool down their pace of activity. They are rather enjoying their boom. Only one side of the argument is being presented on the public stage – and what a melodrama it is turning out to be.

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PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



SIR Rhodes Boyson, the bewhiskered former chairman and Tory politician, has joined his chum Desmond Bloom on the board of Manx & Overseas, an AIM-listed electrical retailer on the Isle of Man which Mr Bloom plans to turn into a property trading business.

Sir Rhodes, now retired after 23 years as a Member of Parliament, has always had two non-executive directorships ever since he left politics.

"I'm an economist, although most people think of me as an educationalist," he says. He has sat on the board of Blacks Leisure since 1987, when his friend, chief executive Simon Bentley, asked him to join. "I like these things where you look forward to turning up," he says. "I've known Des Bloom for upwards of 20 years. He wanted me to come on this (Manx). The City is an interesting place. This will broaden my interest," he says.

The former acolyte of Margaret Thatcher adds: "I ran a dining club when I was in politics, of which Des was a member. I'm not coming to this cold."

He does admit, however, that commercial property trading is new to him. He isn't looking for any other directorships, he says. "I don't collect them like medals."

Sir Rhodes is also embroiled in writing a book about the contemporary political scene, which takes between two and six hours of his day. He concludes: "I need some discipline. That's a good thing for a headmaster to say."

ROYAL and SunAlliance has ended up dealing with the insurance claim for Tracy Edwards' de-masted round-the-world yacht – the very yacht that the insurance company has been sponsoring.

In fact, Royal & SunAlliance owns the yacht – called, appropriately enough, *Royal & SunAlliance*.

Understandably, the company is chary about discussing the cost of the attempted circumnavigation of the globe. The original budget for Tracy and her 10-strong crew in their attempt to capture the Trophee Jules Verne was a cool £4.25m.

Now the crew has returned to Britain after the mast broke in heavy seas. The yacht is in Chile awaiting a new mast, which will have to be made in the UK or France.

So has the project bust its budget? A spokesman for the company says: "We haven't done the sums. It's turned into an insurance claim, and we are the lead insurers."

It will be fascinating to see how strict they will be with themselves.

FOUR DIRECTORS at Flying Flowers have sold shares in the company worth around £3m, just days after they bought Stanley Gibbons in an all-paper bid.

The airborne florists' chief executive Tim Dunningham sold 400,000 ordinary shares in the company at a price of 550p each, trousering a cool £2.2m.

Walter Goldsmith, the company's chairman, sold £165,000-worth. Mr Goldsmith is a highly active entrepreneur, being a director of Betterware, Fitness First and Self Sealing Systems International. He is also a former director-general of the Institute of Directors and a director of more companies than you could shake a stick at.

Bringing up the rear, Flying Flowers' directors David Nightingale and Tom Walker sold £550,000 and £174,185-worth of shares respectively.

You can hardly blame the directors, though. Flying Flowers floated at 155p two years ago and the share price has taken flight since then. They eased 3p pence yesterday to close at 557.5p.

I HEAR CSFB has issued an edict to their new ex-BZW staff along the lines that all front line troops must be in work by 6.30am in the morning and lunchbreaks are not to be spent outside the building. It's a hard life being an investment banker these days.

ANY TAKERS for 3.20 German marks to the pound? According to Morgan Stanley, sterling falls the "Martian" test. Kavi Buchandani writes: "It would be hard to prove to a Martian that sterling is obviously overvalued at current levels."

Mr Buchandani names the obvious factors such as the balance of payments, buoyant demand and high level of manufacturing activity. Then he goes on: "The general 'buzz' associated with New Labour, the fact that UK economic policy-making stands out for its quality – particularly in a euro-obsessed European context – and substantial improvements such as the independence of the central bank, all add up to a suggest a very favourable macro-economic backdrop for investment in UK PLC."

All very well, but surely a Martian would just zap the lot of us?

BATH Press's former non-executive chairman, Tony Fisher, has retired from the board, the company said yesterday. Mr Fisher agreed to remain as a non-executive director for the past year following the appointment of Sir James Hanna as non-executive chairman.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	100.00	2557.2	2557.2
Australia	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Belgium	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Canada	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Denmark	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
EU	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
France	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Germany	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Greece	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Hong Kong	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
India	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Japan	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Malaysia	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Netherlands	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
New Zealand	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Norway	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Portugal	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Spain	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
South Africa	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Sweden	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
Switzerland	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0
US	2548.0	2548.0	2548.0

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month
Argentina	100.00	100.00	100.00
Brazil	100.00	100.00	100.00
China	100.00	100.00	100.00
Czech Rep	100.00	100.00	100.00
Egypt	100.00	100.00	100.00
Ghana	100.00	100.00	100.00
Hungary	100.00	100.00	100.00
India	100.00	100.00	100.00
Indonesia	100.00	100.00	100.00
Israel	100.00	100.00	100.00
Italy	100.00	100.00	100.00

Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan	
Base	7.25%	Discount	8.50%	
France	Discount	Prime	Discount	
Intervention	3.30%	Canada	5.00%	
Italy	Prime	5.00%	Spain	3.00%
Discount	5.50%	10-d	4.50%	
Netherlands	Denmark	Sweden	Discount	
Swap/Advance	3.30%	Repo/Avg	4.35%	
		Lombard	1.25%	

Bond Yields							
Country	3mth	1 yr	2 yr	5 yr	10 yr		
Australia	-4.75	-0.02	4.89	-0.03	4.83	5.28	-0.02
Belgium	3.66	-0.02	3.65	-0.02	4.24	4.53	0.03
Canada	3.66	-0.02	3.65	-0.02	4.24	4.53	0.03
France	4.25	0.00	4.23	0.00	4.19	4.57	0.00
ECU	0.00	0.00	3.72	0.00	4.19	4.57	0.00
Finland	3.63	0.00	3.64	0.00	4.08	4.50	0.00
Germany	3.40	0.00	3.40	0.00	4.08	4.50	0.00
Italy	5.40	0.00	5.40	0.00	4.55	4.77	0.01
Japan	0.49	0.03	-0.01	0.01	0.01	1.24	0.00
Netherlands	3.56	0.00	3.56	-0.01	4.49	4.50	0.00
Sweden	4.37	0.00	4.37	0.00	4.31	4.69	0.00
Switzerland	4.37	0.00	4.37	0.00	4.31	4.69	0.00
UK	4.37	0.00	4.37	0.00	4.31	4.69	0.00
US	4.90	-0.01	5.09	0.03	5.97	6.02	0.03
	7.00	0.00	7.00	0.00	6.07	6.07	0.00
	4.90	-0.01	5.09	0.03	5.97	6.02	0.03

Bond Yields

Country	3mth	6mth	1yr	2yr	3yr	5yr	10yr	15yr
Australia	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Belgium	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Canada	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
EU	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
France	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Germany	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Italy	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Japan	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Netherlands	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Sweden	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Switzerland	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
UK	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

Money Market Rates

Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Germany	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
US	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Japan	4.75	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Settlement	Open
Long Call	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Call	Put	Call	Put
5050	17.00	17.00	17.00	17.00
5100	17.00	17.00	17.00	17.00
5150	17.00	17.00	17.00	17.00
5200	17.00	17.00	17.00	17.00

Energy

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Settlement	Open
Long Call	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Commodity Indices

Index	Base	Last	Chg	%Chg
Agri	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Metals	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Energy	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00

Industrial Metals

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Settlement	Open
Long Call	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Precious Metals

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Settlement	Open
Long Call	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Agricultural

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Settlement	Open
Long Call	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Other Softs

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Settlement	Open
Long Call	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Short Put	50.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit Trust	Price	Change
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	100.00	0.00
4.48% Bond Fund Ltd	100.00	0.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	100.00	0.00
4.48% Bond Fund Ltd	100.00	0.00

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AIM Growth Trust Ltd	100.00	0.00
4.48% Bond Fund Ltd	100.00	0.00



Gould's unusual route to the top ends in Paradise

Phil Shaw meets a striker-turned-keeper who has stepped out of his father's shadow to become a key figure in Celtic's title quest

OUT on the slopes of Celtic Park, the feuding tribes traded anthems and insults. Down in the tunnel, two lines of players stared ahead, chewing nervously and steeling themselves for the Old Firm fray. It was then that the television cameras caught Jonathan Gould chatting casually with Andy Gorm.

This, clearly, was more than simply two members of the goalkeepers' union exchanging fraternal greetings. So what was it last Sunday that was important, or interesting, enough for supposedly bitter rivals to cut through an almost tangible tension?

Gould, whose agility and authority have been major factors in Celtic's challenge to Rangers' hopes of a 10th successive championship, laughs as he reveals all. "Andy's a keen cricketer like myself and he just tapped me on the shoulder to ask whether I fancied going down to Ayrshire to play with him and his mates this summer."

While the invitation was as welcome as its timing was surprising, Gould felt obliged to point out that Gorm had a prior engagement. He was tempted to offer to take his place in Scotland's party for the World Cup finals, but there is a possibility that the 29-year-old Londoner – eligible for Craig Brown's squad because his mother was born in Blantyre – may yet accompany his Rangers counterpart to France.

Nine months ago he was better known as the son of Bobby Gould, the outspoken manager of Wales, than for safe handling. He had fallen so far from favour at Bradford City that he spent one Saturday with the chairman's cricket team because he was not even wanted on the bench at Blackpool.

Now he plays at the place colloquially known as Paradise, the undisputed No 1 for one of Britain's leading clubs. When the Celtic manager, Wim Jansen, ponders how to avenge last week's Scottish Cup semi-final defeat in a potentially decisive Premier Division derby at Ibrox on Sunday, Gould's name will be first on his sheet for reasons of form as well as formation.

To reach that position he has overcome the prejudice of those who assumed he owed his career to nepotism, as well as a lack of formal football education. For when his contemporaries were serving apprenticeships, Gould was studying for A-Levels. As they turned pro, he was working nine to five in a Bristol bank.

Amazingly, he did not even play in goal, turning out up front for Shirehampton in the Somerset Senior League. Football was "in my blood", but his father, once a striker at Premier-ship level, told him he was not good enough to make it as an

outfield player. The only hope, he suggested, was to reinvent himself as a keeper.

Gould practised furiously. He virtually wore out a video of great saves, devoured Bruce Grobbelaar's autobiography and studied the custodian's art from the stands. At 22, however, he had progressed no further than Clevedon in the Western League while working as a hydraulic engineer.

Eventually, Fourth Division Halifax gave him a trial and a belated League debut. It was a winning start, too, if not a lucrative one. "The club rule was that we had to be out of the bottom four to qualify for a win bonus," he recalls. "We never managed it in my two years there."

The arrival of John McGrath made him realise that some managers viewed his presence as a threat. "They seemed to think I was going to sneak off to phone my dad saying 'you'll never believe the decision he's made'."

'They seemed to think I was sneaking off to phone my dad saying 'you'll never believe the decision he's made''

He sensed that the writing might be on the wall at Halifax when he heard McGrath announce in an after-dinner speech: "We've got a player here, Jonathan Gould, who, if he was a sky-diver, would miss the earth."

His father had faith in his talent, signing him for West Brom and Coventry in turn. "If anything, he was harder on me than he would have been on someone else," Gould says, "but it probably made me stronger."

At Highfield Road he displaced Steve Ogrizovic – "on merit in my opinion, though Ogy wouldn't agree" – and attracted Scotland's interest. Ron Atkinson, unimpressed, off-loaded him to Bradford. He won man of the match awards, but again the perception was not shared by the manager, Chris Kamara.

"He was addressing a supporters' meeting when a barman dropped some glasses and he said: 'I see Gould's in tonight'." Gould might have enjoyed the joke had Kamara not made it plain he did not want him at the club.

Last summer, on being offered a "free", Gould called numerous lower-division managers. From Gillingham to

Stoke to Scarborough, they all turned him down. He was now convinced that his father's reputation, far from opening doors, was hindering him.

Then, the morning after he played for the reserves at Clitheroe, the old man rang to say: "Celtic are interested – keep your mobile on." Bradford's coach reluctantly let him take it on a training run. He had gone 100 yards when Celtic's general manager, Jock Brown (brother of Craig), phoned. Gould immediately drove to Glasgow and quickly earned a contract.

So far he has kept 22 clean sheets, plus one for Scotland B against a Welsh side managed by a familiar face. Celtic-watchers can recall a single possible error, when Marco Negri beat him on his near post in a 1-1 draw with Rangers. Gould agrees, though the shot was "like a rocket", and concedes he might have done better with a free-kick scored by Dundee United.

His contribution has been likened to Gorm's across the city – the highest praise in his book – while he has also impressed as an articulate ambassador for Celtic. A visit to the memorial to John Thomson, the keeper who died from injuries sustained against Rangers in 1931, gave him an early insight into their place in Scottish culture.

Now, Gould could find himself immortalised as part of the team who ended Rangers' ascendancy. Opposing fans still call him an "English bastard", but to his delight and relief, Jansen had no preconceptions about his parentage or his past. The Dutchman's sole criterion is his performance.

Ibrox should go a long way towards settling the title race, despite Hearts' gallant pursuit. Celtic lead by three points with five games left, but Rangers may have gained a psychological advantage in the Cup. "It was strange," Gould reflects, "we should have had it wrapped up by half-time, but in the end we could have lost by four or five."

"The disappointment won't fully hit us until we see Rangers play in the final. Our main emotion afterwards was disbelief. We hadn't played well for a while without losing, whereas we dominated Rangers for an hour and lost. Wim has tried to get through to us that if we play that well again, we could come out on top."

Another high-class display by Gould, amid a clamour which renders communication with defenders all but impossible, may also influence Craig Brown's thoughts when he names his national squad next week. Just as banking's loss has proved to be Celtic's gain, Ayrshire's cricketers might be advised to explore other options.



Whole new ball game: Jonathan Gould has transformed his career in nine months

Photograph: Craig Halkett

Arsenal suffer Keown setback

ARSENAL will be without England defender Martin Keown for the next three games with an eye injury. The loss increases Arsenal's defensive worries just as their problems up front were on the verge of being eased as the title race intensifies.

Keown suffered an accidental cut to his eye during Arsenal's FA Cup semi-final victory over Wolves last Sunday at Villa Park.

Although the Gunners initially believed the cut was not serious, doctors have since warned the central defender to sit out the dress rehearsal for the FA Cup final against Newcastle at Highbury on Saturday as well as Monday's trip to Blackburn as a precaution.

Keown is then suspended for the following Saturday's game against Wimbledon, a match for which his natural replacement, Steve Bould, is also banned, but he should be fit for England's next friendly against Portugal in two weeks' time.

With full-back Lee Dixon still out injured, there is now also a worry over Gilles Grimandi, who has a back problem.

But Arsenal, six points behind the leaders, Manchester United, with three games in hand, can at least welcome the return of Dennis Bergkamp from suspension for the trip to Ewood Park.

Arsenal winger Marc Overmars yesterday failed in his claim for three million florins (£1m) from his former club, Ajax. The Dutch football federation rejected Overmars' appeal that he was owed 20 per cent of the £5m Arsenal paid the Dutch League leaders for him last year. The Ajax board had refused to pay him anything.

The Newcastle manager, Kenny Dalglish, will wait until the last moment before picking his team to face Arsenal. Newcastle have five players – Steve Howey, Darren Peacock, Alessandro Pistone, Rob Lee and Steve Watson – on the treatment table.

Tommy Craig has joined Newcastle as a coach until the end of the season. The Scotland Under-21 coach, who played for Newcastle before moving on to Celtic, will help Dalglish and Alan Irvine as the former coach Tommy Burns has moved on to become manager at Reading.

The Barnsley defender Chris Morgan yesterday received a further one-game ban on completion of his four-match suspension, which starts this weekend. Morgan will now be available for selection in the final match of the season against Manchester United. The 20-year-old, who was appearing before a Football Association disciplinary committee, was also fined £250.

Police at Leeds police station said yesterday they were questioning Chelsea's Bernard Lambourne after an allegation of indecent assault in a hotel near Leeds following his team's 3-1 defeat to Leeds on Wednesday.

Footballing fathers and sons

By Adam Sills

Gavin and Gordon Strachan
Despite being offered a contract at Leeds, Gavin Strachan followed his father to Coventry in 1992 when dad became assistant manager. The mid-mannered 19-year-old has established himself in the Sky Blues' midfield and in the Scotland Under-21s. Flame-haired younger brother Craig also hopes to follow in his father's fiery footsteps.

Gregor and Bruce Ritchie
Gregor joined Hull City during the 1996 close season from Peterborough while father Bruce was manager at Bolton. Gregor has established himself in the Hull midfield, while Bruce has moved from Arsenal to QPR to a life of leisure.

Andy and Colin Todd
Andy has been a regular defender in his dad's Bolton team this season, after struggling to make an immediate impact, having joined from Middlesbrough in August 1995. Colin became joint manager with Roy McFarland in the same month, taking full control in January 1996.

Darren and Alex Ferguson
Alex sold his son to Wolves in January 1994 for £250,000. Injury has blighted the 26-year-old's career while father has gone on to be the most successful manager of the modern era. Midfielder Darren is fit again and hoping to bolster Wolves' stuttering play-off challenge.

Ian and Mike Walker

While Mike has overseen Norwich's championship slide in the First Division's goalkeeper Ian has struggled with a shoulder injury which kept him out of the game for 10 weeks. As well as doing Spurs' no favours, this could have cost Ian a possible England World Cup place. Both could end up relegated this season.

Ian and Ronnie Moore
Together at Tranmere Rovers until Ronnie left the club in May 1996, both are now fighting for promotion with their new teams. Striker Ian is not a regular starter but looks to have a better chance of getting promoted with Nottingham Forest after his £1m move in March 1997, than his dad at Rotherham, who are five points off a play-off place in the Third Division.

Jamie and Harry Redknapp
Liverpool midfielder Jamie is cousin to West Ham's Frank Lampard Jr as well as being son to manager Harry. A World Cup place for Jamie and a European place for the Harrys and the Redknapp house will be a happy place come May.

Frank Lampard Sr and Jr
Frank Jr has established himself in the West Ham first team, while father has watched proudly as assistant manager. Frank Sr's wife is the sister of manager Harry Redknapp's wife, which makes Frank Jr Harry's nephew.

Craig and Sam Allardyce

Craig lost trials for his dad's team, Peterborough, after Sam joined the club as manager in January 1997. Like his father, Craig came into the club having signed for Chesterfield from non-league Chorley on transfer deadline day. Craig's father had already confirmed their promotion to the Second Division.

Paul and Kenny Dalglish
Dad has closely followed Paul's progress while he has been on loan at First Division Bury. The 21-year-old striker has started just one game since his move in November and will reach dad at the end of the season.

Mark and Graham Turner
Mark left dad, the Hibernian United manager, to join Bedford United at the end of last season. Mark showed his father what he had learned on when he scored for Bedford against Hibernian in the 1-1 draw in the Vauxhall Conference clash in February. The pair were also together in the Vauxhall Conference in 1981 and 1984, the year when both left the club.

Greg and Alex Miller
Greg's transfer from Hibernian to Scottish Second Division club Livingston last week could prove to be a temporary step down with his father, who is the bottom of the Premier Division's list of managers, in an automatic promotion race. Father, Alex, Aberdeen manager and Scotland's No 2, could also be reunited with his son next season with The Dons hovering above the drop to the Premier Division.

Groundhoppers invade Devon again

Non-League notebook

By Rupert Metcalf

THE busiest man in the non-League game this Easter will be Phil Hiscox, the secretary of the Devon League – and the organiser of a festival of football which will ferry several hundred fans to seven games in two days.

This is the second year in which the Devon League has hosted the annual Easter groundhoppers' convention. From all over Britain and beyond, non-League enthusiasts will be heading west to take in three games today and then four tomorrow.

The humble standard of football will neither surprise nor distress them – what matters for the groundhoppers is the opportunity to tick off new grounds. Hence none of the seven venues to be used this weekend was visited last year – and there will be seven other clubs to visit next year for the final Devon Hop.

"I started planning for this year before last year's Hop," Hiscox said this week. As well as sorting out the fixture programme, he has had to arrange accommodation for the hoppers at Exeter University and find coach drivers that can cope with both Devon lanes and the tight schedule.

The biggest worry for Hiscox is the weather, with rain, hail and even snow forecast for Devon this weekend. "Home clubs – and referees – are being told every effort must be made to get games on," he said. If needed, he will no doubt do what he did at Newton Abbot Spurs on Tuesday – don his wellies and help to fork the pitch.

Last Easter 236 hoppers bought advance tickets for the weekend. The number this year is 220 but, like last year, many more will buy tickets on the day. Two fans from the Netherlands are returning for their second Devon Hop, and they will be joined by other familiar faces like the hopper who has to touch both crossbars at every ground visited, and the blind fan

who relies on his friends for commentary.

"The nicest thing that happened last year," Hiscox said, "was unexpectedly receiving an Ajax shirt in the post for my young son from the two Dutch fans a fortnight after the Hop."

As long as the weather does not spoil the event, Hiscox is looking forward to this year's Hop – and next year's. "I'm keen to see it start," he said. "I enjoyed it last year – but only after the first game kicked off."

WESTWARD DEVELOPMENTS DEVON LEAGUE EASTER HOP: Today, Topham Town v Budleigh Salterton (10); Okeford Rangers v Wilford Rovers (20); Ottery St Mary v Stoke Gabriel (23). Tomorrow: Woburn Town v Dartmouth United (10); Plymouth Parkway v Western Hill Oak Villa (20).

McCreesh hauled before Board after positive drug test

Boxing

GEOFF MCCREESH, the British welterweight champion, has been called to appear before the British Boxing Board of Control stewards on 13 May after he tested positive for a banned substance following his European title fight against

Not only did McCreesh lose, it took three months for his purse of around £27,000 to be paid by the promoter. The cash eventually came in instalments after pressure from the British Board and his manager, Jim Evans.

The European Boxing Union recently decided to exclude McCreesh from their rankings for a year.

McCreesh must soon start concentrating on the second defence of his British title against Wales' Michael Smyth, which must take place by the end of June. He took the title from Kevin Lueshing last July and he successfully defended the crown with a second-round win over Paul "Scrap Iron" Ryan.

Today's fixtures

Football

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Man Utd v Liverpool (5.0)

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE
First Division
Charlton v Reading (1.0)
Sunderland v QPR (7.0)

SECOND DIVISION
Bristol Rovers v Wigan (3.30)
Wycombe v Grimsby (3.05)

RYMAN LEAGUE Premier Division: Oxford City v Kingstons (7.45), First Division: Leyton Orient v Grays (2.0)

UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division: Bishop Auckland v Blyth Spartans (8.0), First Division: Macclesfield v Farnley (7.30)

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Division: Forest Green v Salisbury (7.0)

UNILET SUSSEX LEAGUE John O'Hara League Cup Final: Burgess Hill v Portfield (10.0) (at Lancing FC)

SCREWFX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Division: Brestington v Keynsham (10.0), Bristol Manor Farm v Mangotsfield (10.0)

Barnstaple v Bideford (6.0), Celine v Chippenham (10.0), Chert v Bridport (10.0), Elmora v Tiverton (6.30), Odd Down v Paxton (10.0), Westbury v Melsham (3.0)

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN LEAGUE First Division: Jarrow Roofing v South Shields (10.0)

HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND Premier Division: St Patrick's Athletic v Bohemians (7.45), Kilmory City v Finn Harps (7.30)

Rugby League

JUST SPORTS SUPER LEAGUE: Castleford v Sheffield (7.30), Halifax v Huddersfield (7.30), Hull v London (3.15), St Helens v Wigan (12.45), Warrington v Salford (3.0)

FIRST DIVISION: Dewsbury v Hunslet (7.30), Keighley v Hull Kingston Rovers (7.30), Swinton v Leigh (6.0), Wakefield v Featherstone (7.30), Whitehaven v Widnes (7.30), Second Division: Barrow v Workington (3.0), Postponed: Oldham v Lancashire Lynx, York v Brantley.

Rugby Union

ALLIED DUNBAR PREMIERSHIP ONE: Bath v Saracens (5.0), Richmond v Bristol (3.0)

Hockey

EUROPEAN WOMEN'S CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP A Division (Southgate HQ): Edinburgh v Real Sociedad (3p) (22.0), Slovan v Danzerka Volgogradsk (Rus) (2.0)

EUROPEAN SIX NATIONS TOURNAMENT (Millon Keynes HC): England v France (Stadium, 3.0), Under-16: England v France (Millon Keynes HC, 2.0), Girls Under-16: England v Germany (Stadium, 1.0), Under-16: England v Spain (Stadium, 10.0)

Speedway

LITE LEAGUE: Ipswich v Coventry (7.30)

SPEEDWAY STAR CUP: Poole v Kings Lynn (8.30), Swinton v Oxford (10.0), Oxford v Swinton (7.45), Belle Vue v Wolverhampton (7.30)

PREMIER LEAGUE: Peterborough v Stoke (7.45)

PREMIER LEAGUE CUP: Araris Essex v Newport (3.0), Isle of Wight v Reading (7.30), Edinburgh v Newcastle (7.30), Sheffield v Berwick (7.30)

CONFERENCE LEAGUE: Newport v Midwales (11.5)

Other sports

SHOCKER: British Open (Plymouth Pavilion)

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Fury over Cotton's scare story

Rugby Union

By Chris Hewett

FRAN COTTON is either a legal sleuth straight from the pages of a John Grisham novel or the greatest scaremonger since Alfred Hitchcock. The biggest personality in the British game took up the political cudgels again yesterday, accusing professional clubs of plotting an overthrow of the International Board, the governing body of world rugby, and raising the spectre of England's expulsion from the 1999 World Cup.

Egged on by Cliff Brittle and Clive Woodward, the recently resigned former vice-chairman of the Rugby Football Union's management board painted a conspiratorial scenario so distasteful the word "nightmare" was rendered inadequate. Cotton brandished a copy of the club's legal application to the European Commission for clarification of commercial and contractual rights, claiming its very existence exposed the latest peace RFU peace initiative as a "sham" and posed a real threat to England's participation in next year's showpiece.

"This issue transcends petty jealousies and internal squabbling and I'm not taking this stand for reasons of ambition or self-aggrandisement," he insisted. "The clubs' document challenges IB and RFU control of international fixture scheduling and the primacy of international rugby. The authorities were allowed to schedule Test matches only with the agreement of a handful of senior clubs, who would release players if and when they thought fit. If it goes through, it's World War Three."

All of which sent club activists spluttering into their business suits and reaching for the nearest dial button. Doug Ash, the chief executive of English First Division Rugby, called the allegations "ludicrous".

The clubs admit they have put a number of points to the IB, alleging that restrictive practices are built into IB regulations. Indeed, they have never made any secret of their planned recourse to the law. "The fact of the matter is that the clubs have intrinsic commercial rights that are sacrosanct and enshrined in European Union law," said Ash, a graduate of the Harvard Business School. "As a result of the RFU's previous intransigence, regulations are now being investigated by the Office of Fair Trading and the EC [EU]."

"However, the EC submission was made at the end of last month, prior to the intervention of Peter Brook, the RFU president. Our hope is that the talks with the union will result in the OFT and EC inquiries becoming redundant." It was Brook who led last week's marginalisation of Brittle, the management board chairman, a move that led to Cotton's resignation on Saturday.

Cotton's talk of World Cup expulsion appeared based on lessons received from a number of major unions, including New Zealand and Australia, during the recent "Northampton Three" affair. But while the short-lived decision of Keith Barwell, the Northampton owner, to withhold his players from England's summer tour of the southern hemisphere left the RFU temporarily open to IB sanction, there is no suggestion that a perfectly legal approach to the EU could land the union in hot disciplinary water.

Union negotiators were scheduled to meet with their club counterparts yesterday to begin the search for a peaceful solution. Cotton and Brittle, meanwhile, intend to hold "grass roots" meetings in Banbury, Rugby, Huddersfield and Twickenham over the next fortnight as a prelude to yet another Special General Meeting of the RFU.



Stormy outlook: Alec Stewart (left) and Adam Holoake reflect on England's one-day defeat at Port of Spain

West Indies v England one-day international averages									
ENGLAND					West Indies				
Batting	M	NO	Runs	HS	Batting	M	NO	Runs	HS
N V Knight	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
A J Holoake	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
A D B Croft	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
M R Rampersad	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
M A Atherton	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
A J Stewart	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
A J Holoake	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
A C Russell	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
G A Hirst	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
N V Knight	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
A J Holoake	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
A D B Croft	1	0	285	122	1	0	0	0	0
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US Masters: Woods begins with a buffeting as a 66-year-old former champion shoots level par to set the pace at a damp Augusta

Brewer flies flag for the golden oldies

By Andy Farwell
in Augusta, Georgia

TIGER WOODS found Augusta National pretty much as he left it twelve months ago: debris everywhere. But instead of those laid waste by his 12-stroke victory for his first US Masters last year, the course was littered with leaves and pine cones taking flight on a gusty and swirling wind yesterday.

Woods began the defence of his title by driving 40 yards past the tee shot of his playing partner, Matt Kuchar, the US Amateur champion. But the 22-year-old sometimes has problems controlling his iron shots in the wind and despite having a wedge in his hands, he missed the green and had to get up and down for an opening par.

Already his run of leading the Masters had come to an end as the first man into the clubhouse was 66-year-old Gay Brewer with a level-par 72. The 1967 champion added a late footnote to a career as a noted wind player by becoming the oldest competitor to match par in the Masters.

Birdies at the 16th and 17th brought Brewer his lowest score at Augusta for 15 years and the possibility for making the cut for only the 13th time in his 36 appearances here. "I am not surprised how I played," he said. His lead lasted until Paul Azinger sneaked in at one under, but Brewer's name did not disappear

as quickly down the leaderboard as is usual for the old champions who lead the field off.

Overnight rain may have may have saved the players from the hard and fast greens that they regularly have to deal with at Augusta, but the elements provided a natural counterbalance with the strength of the wind. Azinger, with a low ball flight, also revelled in the conditions and after birdieing the par-five second parred his way round.

Azinger, the 1993 USPGA champion who later that year underwent chemotherapy for a lymphoma in his shoulder, also played well in 69 on the opening day a year ago when the course played particularly firm. "I thought that was the toughest day I'd seen at Augusta until today," Azinger said, "and this was my best round since that day."

An illustration of the problems on the greens in a strong wind came at the third hole, where Azinger saw his birdie attempt from three feet slip five feet by. "The wind made it a guessing game for the most part," he added. "If it keeps up we will not have to worry about Tiger shooting 18 under again. If it had been calm, with the greens holding as they are, you might have seen a 63. If there is no wind, this course is there for the taking—but so is St Andrews and other great courses. I don't think we have to worry

about the course being obsolete yet."

Inevitably, one of the higher scores came from one of the newcomers. Spain's Ignacio Garrido shooting an 85. "This may be my first time here but in all the years I have watched the Masters on the television, it has never been as windy as this," he said. "It was more like the British Open than the Masters."

Much of the damage was done on the par-five 15th, where he took an 11. That equalled the highest score for the hole by Jumbo Ozaki in '87 and Ben Crenshaw last year. The Ryder Cup player found the pond in front of the green three times, first with a three-wood second shot and then with two duffed pitches.

"I thought it would be an easy three-wood but it was hard to know where the wind was coming from," said Garrido, whose father Antonio also played in the Masters. "On each of those three shots which went in the water the wind felt different. I was quite happy how I was coping until then but that was a disaster."

Everyone had a story to tell. Fred Couples birdied the first three holes, gave two shots back but still got to the turn in 33. Lee Westwood matched his double-bogey start of last year, then mixed two bogeys and three birdies in his next seven holes.

Sandy Lyle, having on Wednesday become the first man to retain the par-three title which has historically been a jinx for the main event, eagled the 13th and was one over with two to play. Lyle was playing with Craig Watson, the British Amateur champion, who was out in 41.

Before the main contenders started their campaigns in the afternoon, another Masters tradition dictates that Gene Sarazen, 96, Byron Nelson, 86, and Sam Snead, 85, all hit balls off the first tee. Snead managed a blow of 190 yards despite having come out of hospital only the day before.

The three-times Masters champion complained of feeling dizzy while being driven up from Florida on Tuesday and had to miss the champions' dinner. "At least it gave other people the chance to tell a few stories," said Jackson Stephens, the Augusta chairman.

Early first-round scores from Augusta

71 P Azinger	B R Brown
72 G Brewer	B Mayfair
72 J Heas	D
73 O Browne	D Ogrin
73 C Pavin	C Goody
B Faxon	F Funk
S McCarron	A Palmer
T Kite	G Hjertstedt (Swe)
L Mize	81
M Bradley	B Casper
74 W Wood	T Aaron
B Tway	*K Bakst
*J Kriebel	83
75 D Toms	B Crenshaw
T Tolles	85
B Andrade	I Garrido (Sp)
B Hughes (Aus)	86
76	D Ford



Sandy Lyle, the US Masters champion 10 years ago, drives off the second tee during yesterday's first round at Augusta

Photograph: Allsport

Pavin desperate to locate missing baby

IT CAN happen to the toughest of them and it has happened to Corey Pavin, his career in such disarray that he went to the first tee at Augusta National in free fall.

No golfer appeared to play a harder game than the 1995 US Open champion, nobody looked more difficult to beat or less likely to be confused by golf's technical mysteries.

Pavin had a swing that stood up under pressure, an attitude that many of his contemporaries envied, the cold eyes of a gunslinger.

Then came the decline that undermined Pavin's confidence. Fourth on the money list in 1995 with earnings of \$1.34m (£830,000), he plunged 164 places last year with no better finish than eighth in the Mercedes Championship.

Reflecting on the troubles

Ken Jones follows a former gunslinger of the greens aiming to reverse his sudden decline with a mastery display of firepower

that have overtaken him Pavin could not remember when form deserted him. "Last year was just horrible," he said.

"Bad habits developed in my swing and I wasn't able to correct them. It got worse and worse as the year went on. I was 176th on Tour in greens in regulation and you can't play out here doing that. Not only will you be out of contention, you won't even make cuts."

This year Pavin has missed five of eight cuts, finishing no better than tied for 39th place with only \$11,155 (£7,000) in earnings, but he dismisses the theory that a change of clubs led to his problems. "If I didn't like them I wouldn't use them," he said. "Things began

to go wrong 18 months ago and I have it difficult to put them right."

Now working with an English coach, Gary Smith, who was on David Leadbetter's staff, Pavin arrived at Augusta feeling that the Masters would be another turning point in his 17-year professional career.

Going off into a cross wind that all the competitors would find troublesome, in some cases more than could be coped with, Pavin dropped a shot at the second, but made two birdies to reach the turn at one over.

Crossing to the 10th tee, Pavin felt the wind from his right and across at the warring branches of tall pines.

Taking a similar line to his playing partner, David Toms, steady-eyed in concentration, the Californian sent his drive into the perfect position, finding the left side of a wide depression on the fairway.

Applause rippled from the gallery, but Pavin's second was less than perfect leaving him with a tricky long putt that slid seven feet past. Two from there. Back to level par.

So to Amen Corner. With expert judgement and club selection, Pavin foiled the wind with a four-iron to the 11th green that set up a comfortable two putt par.

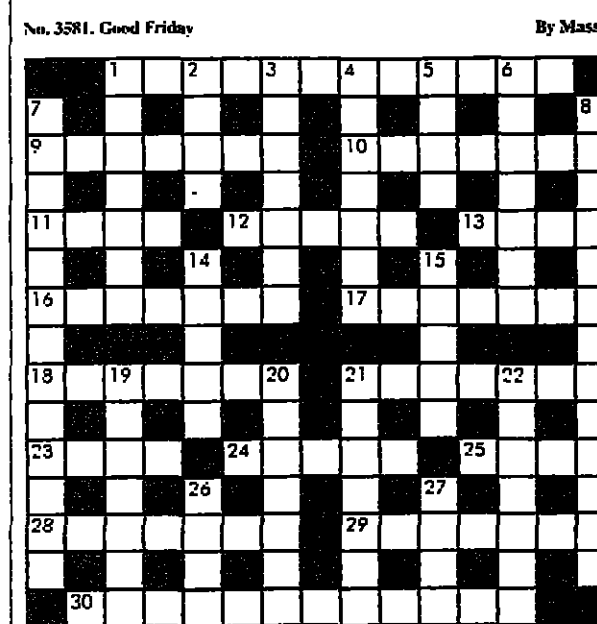
Many have found disaster at the 12th, either finding water in front of the green or the bunker behind. Pavin's

chip back went six feet past and two putts cost him another shot.

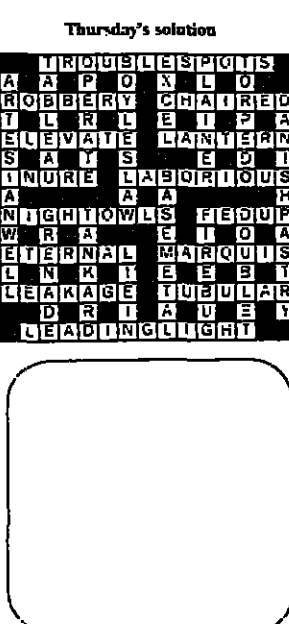
It was after hitting a sand wedge to two-and-a-half feet at the 15th, and despite hoggieing the next, that Pavin felt his game to be in much better order. "That's the best round I've played since—no I don't want to think about how long," he said after finishing one over. "That's a good score in these conditions and I'm delighted to be hitting the ball good again. Only thing was that my putter let me down."

Pavin's victory in the US Open removed the curse of being known as the best player never to win a major championship. "But this is the baby," he said. "I most want." He added. There was the trace of a smile on his face and the steel was back in his eyes.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Graves might well interest him (4,8)
 - With back-swinging space round ice, Edward drove (7)
 - Fancy better food? (7)
 - Stench caught emanating from inlet (4)
 - Nut left in dish (5)
 - Animal companion last to be culled (4)
 - Eye shield holds appeal for tourist (7)
 - Soft fluttering of linnet about onset of evening (7)
 - Hard penetrating tree's surfact (7)
 - Slip in rank for reservist (7)
 - Cash placed with Eastern branch (4)
 - Tree beginning to shiver in a stir (5)
 - Remnant of second boat (4)
 - Old boy's smoke is cloudy (7)
 - Fruit reportedly for making crush (7)
 - A help when faced with grounds for improvement? (6,6)
 - Certify zany head (7)
 - Nag needs grass (4)
 - Loud cracking in wreck of spacecraft units (7)
 - Quote abridged in actual narration (7)
 - Climber with energy and ambition (4)
 - Nasty rumour about Order of Merit (7)



- DOWN**
- I'm for ordeal, having jilted Italian vamp (13)
 - Flier with a crest I bred—new line introduced (9,4)
 - Hedge forming enclosure (5)
 - Stamp, cut by Northern nip (5)
 - A condition beyond recall (7)
 - Network's axed grim film? (7)
 - Lac bubbling in plant, sticky substance (7)
 - In time vocally regretted trespass (7)
 - Recreation, day in a pool (4)
 - One in the clouds? (4)

PSV reject higher United Stam bid

Football

PSV EINDHOVEN have rejected Manchester United's second bid for their Dutch international centre-back Jaap Stam.

The United chairman, Martin Edwards, flew to the Netherlands yesterday morning to make a first attempt to buy the defender. United are understood to have increased their offer by £3m to around £10m for Stam, who was recently voted the Netherlands' Player of the Year.

but that is still not enough for PSV.

Edwards said later that PSV were still considering United's offer, without saying exactly how much it was. The Dutch club do not want to lose Stam, who is under contract until 2003, and are unwilling to accept much less than their £15m asking price.

United are refusing to comment on their latest bid, but a PSV spokesman, Pedro Salazar-Hewitt, contradicted Edwards, saying: "We told Mr Edwards our point of view and he has

gone back to England to think about it and talk to his people there. It's now up to him to come back to us some time in the future if he wants to and we didn't arrange another meeting."

Stam has stated he would like to move to the Premiership and join United and a number of English sides are apparently interested in him.

Salazar-Hewitt denied that PSV were holding on to Stam in the hope that his value will rise after the World Cup finals in the summer. Stam, 25, is ex-

pected to play a starring role for the Netherlands in France, which could increase his value.

"To wait until after the World Cup would be a gamble because he may not play well or he could get injured," he said.

Manchester United will be at full strength for today's Premiership match with Liverpool at Old Trafford. Peter Schmeichel has been declared fit after having problems with his hamstring late in Monday's game at Blackburn and Nicky Butt looks certain to start after coming on

as a second half substitute during the 3-1 win at Ewood Park.

Philip Neville could be the player to stand down if Butt plays, with Ryan Giggs and Gary Pallister set to start their first game at Old Trafford since 21 February.

The Liverpool captain, Paul Ince, believes the match is make or break for his side's title hopes. "We believe we can beat Manchester United but it's a win or bust—this truly is it," the former United midfielder said. Gould's route to paradise page 28

Three players fail drug tests but remain anonymous

Snooker

THREE unidentified players have failed random drug tests and will be disciplined by the game's governing body, the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association, next Tuesday. The news has come at an unfortunate moment with the World Championships beginning in Sheffield in 10 days' time.

The WPBSA yesterday refused to name the players involved. Martyn Blake, company secretary of the WPBSA, said: "It would be wrong to name the players or the circumstances behind the positive tests before the players have

had a chance to put their case. Snooker was the first professional sport to introduce an official drugs testing policy in April 1985. Our procedures are thorough and fair."

The WPBSA directors David Taylor, Jim Meadowcroft and the disciplinary chairman, Bob Close, will sit in judgement in Bristol next week. A number of players have previously been caught taking drugs. The former world champion Cliff Thorburn was fined £10,000 and banned for two tournaments after testing positive for cocaine and his fellow Canadian Kirk Stevens admitted an addiction to the same drug.

Ian Doyle, who manages 18 players including Stephen Hendry, Ken Doherty and Ronnie O'Sullivan, yesterday defended the game, claiming there is no widespread drugs problem. He said: "I don't think there is a drug problem in snooker for one minute. I suppose it is inevitable in today's society that the odd player from time to time is going to get caught out. But when you compare our record with other sports snooker is miles better."

Yesterday's news comes less than a week after Jimmy Michie and Mark Gray were involved in a match at the British Open in Plymouth investigated by the WPBSA for evidence of possible match-rigging.

Betting on the first round match was suspended after Gray was backed from 11-10 to 1-3 favourite. But no further action was taken and the bookmakers paid out.

News of the positive drugs tests surprised players competing in the British Open yesterday where Neal Foulds rolled back

the years to reach his first major quarter-final for four years. He upset Dominic Dale 5-4 and now meets the world champion Ken Doherty.

Earlier Doherty whitewashed Karl Burrows 5-0 and has dropped only one frame in getting to the last eight. John Higgins, the world No 2, was a war of attrition with Steve Davis 5-1. Ronnie O'Sullivan also won 5-1, defeating Stephen Lee in just 70 minutes with breaks of 59, 118, 50 and 42. Higgins meets Mark King or Gary Poynting while O'Sullivan takes on the title holder Mark Williams, or Gary Wilkinson.

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